



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP INC.

Protecting the distinctive features of Blackburn since 1987

BULLETIN

Bulletin No. 79

May 2013

Position Vacant - Secretary

Would you like to become more involved in the Blackburn community? Do you have good organisational and computer skills? BVRG would like to hear from you. Time involved on average would be a couple of hours a week. Duties include preparing agendas for bi-monthly meetings and writing up the minutes as well as assisting with some of the reports and correspondence.

Contact David Morrison on 9894 2531 if you would like more details.

Membership and AGM

Do you have skills and knowledge that would strengthen BVRG committee? We are happy to have committee members with limited time availability 'on call' for support or advice as required.

We extend a warm welcome to new members who have come on board since the last Bulletin. The planning application for 104 Main Street (see item below) has generated a number of new members who have seen the importance of having a local group with a handle on planning matters who can respond when inappropriate development is proposed. BVRG offers members information and sometimes support on planning issues in Blackburn. BVRG prepares submissions on planning matters to state and local government that represents the views of members.

The BVRG AGM was held on Thursday 22 November and office bearers and committee were re-elected as shown at the end of this Bulletin.

New Membership Form

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

Bushland in our Urban Environment

The Friends of Healesville Freeway Reserve - Call to Action

The Friends of Healesville Freeway Reserve (Whitehorse) organised a Community Open Day on Sunday 26 May 2013 to rally support for the retention of the 35-hectare ex-freeway reserve in Forest Hill/Vermont/Vermont South for open space. The location of this land is Melway maps 62 E-5 to K-5 and 63 A-5 to C-5.

The land is 'owned' by VicRoads and they are currently engaged in a sham community consultation; their barely concealed objective being to maximise the financial return on this valuable community asset by selling off the land for medium and high-density residential development.

The aim of the open day was to galvanize support from the Whitehorse (and broader) community to demonstrate, to the relevant 'decision-makers' and media present, how much the community values open space and the many community uses currently supported. The aim was achieved with media coverage, a strong community response and representatives from Federal, State and Local Government in attendance.

Whether it be the protection and enhancement of Bellbird Dell and other rare and endangered patches of remnant vegetation thru the link; the potential for a fantastic alternative cycle, pedestrian and 'biolink' thru the reserve from Springvale Road to Boronia Road; retaining Nadrasca farm where it is and strengthen its links even further with the Whitehorse community or the need for more sporting and recreational facilities (eg. at Davy Lane), this land needs to be saved for public use.

The Blackburn and District Environment Protection Fund has made cash contributions toward protecting remnant bushland in the freeway reserve and will accept tax deductible donations for that cause.

Blackburn and District Environment Protection Fund (The Fund)

Now in its fifth year with a number of successful grant programs running, funded out of generous community donations, the Fund through David Berry was recently awarded the Mayors Choice Award for demonstrated commitment to sustainability in the City of Whitehorse (see enclosed newsletter). The award was announced at the recent Sustainability Week, Sustainable Awards night for the City of Whitehorse.

BVRG was a strong advocate and for the Fund's formation and continues to support The Fund.

What your donation can achieve:

\$15 - 10 indigenous plants

\$35 - 1 cubic metre mulch

\$150 – 100 indigenous plants

Recent grants have been provided to Blackburn Lake Sanctuary for educational activities and to a number of schools and local organisations for sustainable projects, many for indigenous plantings.

Tax Deductable donations can be made via the Funds website
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~badepf/>

Local Planning Issues

104 Main Street!

The VCAT Hearing for a 35 unit development at 104 Main Street was set down for two days starting at 10am, Thursday 4th April. The hearing has however been extended for two days recommencing on Wednesday 29th May at 10am.

A number of local residents made submissions at the VCAT hearing and also a small band of residents made a show of support for those presenting. We encourage those members and others in the community who can spare the time to attend part or all of the remaining hearing days.

The hearing is at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal - 55 King Street, Melbourne, which is a 10 minute walk from Southern Cross Station or a 5 minute tram from Flinders Street Station.

Lake Road Parkland

The BVRG and other local groups have been successful in having Council establish a 'no mow' zone on the site to enable regeneration of indigenous plants. Council have also agreed to the Blackburn Lake Advisory Committee arranging a weeding program that will draw on local residents who volunteer their time to help. In its 2013/14 Budget, Council has set aside funds for gravel path installation, fence renewal and tree improvement works on the site.

Blackburn Station Village Master Plan Implementation

Work has commenced on footpath upgrades in the Blackburn Village shopping Centre on the north side near the Post Office. Works in South Parade will follow later and \$450,000 has been set aside in the Council budget for 2013/14.

Heritage Report

In the report to Council on 8th October 2012 it was noted that there are 208 places in Whitehorse covered by a Heritage Overlay, 198 individual places and ten Precincts (encompassing 506 dwellings). Of these places, six are also listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. Almost one fifth (38) Heritage places are in Blackburn and Blackburn North.

A New Council

We congratulate Andrew Munroe and Denise Massoud on re-election and election respectively as the councillors representing Central Ward and extend further congratulations to Andrew as the new Mayor. Our congratulations also to all other councillors re-elected or elected with the reminder that many of their future decisions in the area of urban planning will directly impact on the ordinary resident, the constituent whose home typically represents their largest single lifestyle investment.

New Zone Proposals

We wrote extensively on these proposals in the last Bulletin and the many serious issues we raised, not least those concerning process and implementation, were included in our formal submission, as they were by many other individuals, groups, councils and planners. The Reformed Zones Ministerial Advisory Committee's report and recommendations on the proposed Residential Zones was released first and may be read on the Department's site <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning> and searching for Reformed Zones for Victoria.

City of Whitehorse has endorsed the introduction of the new zones with as yet uncertain implications.

Planning Scheme Amendments

Amendments C143 and C151 - Blackburn and Mega Mile (West) Activity Centres

In July 2010 Whitehorse City Council adopted the MegaMile (West) and Blackburn Activity Centres Urban Design Framework. It was finalised after review of community feedback received during the display of the draft framework in May/June 2010.

The Urban Design Framework for MegaMile (west) and Blackburn Activity Centres is a tool to be used by Council to guide future growth for the next 15 years in a sustainable manner that reflects the community's needs, values and aspirations.

To formally incorporate the recommendations of the MegaMile (west) and Blackburn Activity Centres Urban Design Framework into planning policy, Whitehorse City Council prepared Amendment C143 to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme.

BVRG presented a submission to the Panel Hearing reviewing the Amendment seeking height limits, clear boundaries between the activity centre and nearby residential areas, concrete guidelines to manage traffic caused by overflow parking into residential streets and suggested improvements to make the centre more pedestrian friendly.

Some of the BVRG's concerns were taken up by the Panel whose report and recommendations were adopted by Council and received Ministerial approval on 16th May 2013. In the meantime, Amendment C151 extended to January 2014 policy statements and references associated with the Urban Design Framework for the two Activity Centres.

For more information see <http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Amendment-C143.html>

Amendment C130

Whitehorse City Council has prepared Amendment C130 to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme. The amendment proposes to introduce a new Clause 22.18 Environmentally Efficient Design policy to the Local Planning Policy Framework and update Clause 21.05 Environment to reference environmentally sustainable development.

The amendment introduces changes to ensure that development meets high environmental standards from the design stage through to construction and operation.

BVRG in its submission on 29th April has generally supported the amendment though noted that the use of vegetation to provide shade and passive cooling was omitted. More information is available at <http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/ESD.html>

Neighbourhood Character Study

Whitehorse Council faces changes in its future housing demand, with a trend towards smaller household sizes, a more diverse mix of household compositions and backgrounds, and an ageing population. The number of households to be accommodated is expected to grow.

In April BVRG made a submission to the City of Whitehorse Neighbour Character Study. The study seeks to ensure that Whitehorse can cater for these changing needs, while still ensuring the City's preferred future neighbourhood character can be maintained and enhanced. It is also meant to ensure the study and corresponding controls (including designating substantial, incremental and minimal change areas) reflects changes that have occurred over the past ten years and will meet the future needs of Whitehorse residents.

There have also been a number of developments within some of Whitehorse's smaller shopping centres, referred to as Neighbourhood Activity Centres. To provide greater direction in determining the form of development which may be suitable for these locations, draft Urban Design Guidelines prepared for most centres allow development up to five storeys.

While BVRG generally supported the proposed guidelines for residential areas around Blackburn, it was the proposed large scale development in neighbourhood centres that raised concern and would be unwelcome in the community. More information is available at <http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/hanc.review.html>

State Planning Issues

VCAT Fee increase

The state government proposed a significant increase in fees and sought community views. In our submission to department of Justice, BVRG said that the proposed changes to the fee structure further disenfranchise the ordinary citizen seeking to appeal decisions for proposed developments in residential areas that fail to meet Planning guidelines.

Increases in excess of 200% and greater than \$1000 for Hearing Fees are easily passed on by developers but are a significant barrier to individuals impacted by poor policy and inappropriate development.

We urged a fee structure that keeps legal redress within reach of ordinary citizens.

Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper

This discussion paper proposed a major reappraisal of the development of Melbourne and in the ways we might plan for its future. It raised ideas and concepts many of which were worthy of consideration but it also canvassed a number which have raised general concerns. It may be viewed on the Departmental website: www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au

Responses included a submission from the BVRG which concluded that *"While there are some positive elements in this paper, there are many worrying features including in particular, the sentiments expressed in relation to the role of regulation, the focus on apartment blocks as infill housing in middle suburbs and the treatment of green wedges."*

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

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