



## **BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP INC.**

Protecting the distinctive features of Blackburn since 1987

# **BULLETIN**

**Bulletin 92**

**June 2017**

**2017/18 Subs now due – still \$5 per member.**

**Applications forms for new members at [www.bvrg.org](http://www.bvrg.org).**

This Bulletin is the first for 2017. BVRG has been busy on many fronts as you will see below and these matters have consumed much of our committee resources.

A BVRG web site, recently developed, is now available and members are encouraged to view it - [bvrg.org](http://bvrg.org). Still a work in progress we hope it becomes a community resource for negotiating the planning scheme in the event of an undesirable development in your street or on the block next door.

The end of the financial year means it is also time to renew your membership. Your \$5 annual membership allows BVRG to continue to advocate for Blackburn residents on planning matters to Whitehorse Council as well as the State Government.

### **Level Crossing Removal – Works almost done!**

The final stakeholder meeting with the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) was held on 23 May at Heatherdale station. Progress on works around Blackburn Station and along the shared use path (SUP) has been slower than expected. Landscaping and many small finishing off jobs are still proceeding. The SUP was to be officially opened on 2 June but the opening was cancelled as fencing is not yet complete. Issues over boundary realignment have caused problems for some residents and access to the SUP from Oliver Avenue and Cottage Street is hampered by poor finish. Location of bollards and inadequate crossovers make entering the SUP awkward for cyclists and people with mobility devices. These deficiencies demonstrate poor communication between Council and LXRA throughout the project.

Flooding of the underpass on Anzac Day and the day following (the 5th time since the project began) showed a weakness in the project planning. After strong community anger large capacity pumps were installed. No rain events have occurred since to test the new pumping capacity. The finished project will see connection to larger storm water pipes and automatic pumping. LXRA is confident

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that flooding will no longer be a problem at Blackburn station except in the most extreme rain events. We wait for that hypothesis to be tested.

BVRG has worked with the Blackburn Environment Fund to secure a \$500 donation to provide indigenous plants from Bungalook Nursery for properties impacted by vegetation loss along rail corridor. Council have supported the initiative through a new project 'Gardens for Wildlife' and the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) designed and delivered vouchers to about 80 effected properties.

The alignment of the SUP west to Laburnum, remains a concern for nearby residents. It is a VicRoads project and details still have not yet been finalised. Council have advised that a VicRoads proposal is currently being considered.

## **Retarding Basin Upgrade – Whitehorse.**

Melbourne Water has embarked on a risk minimisation strategy for retarding basins across metropolitan Melbourne. There are a number in Whitehorse that will be upgraded. Works generally involve raising and strengthening the basin earth walls and removing trees that may compromise the wall structure. Decaying tree roots provide a path for flood water to breach the earth banks.

Retarding Basins are open space and often include remnant vegetation and significant trees. Vegetation loss elsewhere means that basins are becoming critical habitat corridors along urban creek valleys. Works at most retarding basins proceed without resident concern however the Masons Road basin is within the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) where trees have protection and the community has a strong interest in its management.

The Mason Road works removed a number of significant trees. Melbourne Water established a Community Advisory Committee of which BVRG is a member. The committee was set up to guide the revegetation and access options after the works finished. Melbourne Water have shown a willingness to work with the community at the planning stage and have agreed to a significant planting schedule and ongoing management of the plants for 2 years after the retarding basin works are complete. The community through the Blackburn and District Environment Fund have donated an additional 250 plants that is to be matched by Council and Melbourne Water will provide 500 plants. A community planting activity will take place in late winter.

The outcome for the Masons Road Basin and nearby residents is a very good one. BVRG has encouraged Melbourne Water to apply the model to other retarding basin works to improve the environmental and community outcomes in other areas.

## **The Bigger Picture**

**City of Whitehorse Tree Study** – In our last bulletin we advised that Council adopted the recommendation to extend Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) protection across the whole Whitehorse municipality. The recommendation made on 18th July 2016 was based on a strategic study by consultants, Planisphere.

Council has sought authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit an amendment to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme to extend the SLO.

Almost a year later with a request still with the Minister and awaiting authorisation we are left wondering how many significant trees will be left by the time the process concludes? See: <http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/treestudy.html>

## **Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy.**

Our last Bulletin invited submissions to the 30 year infrastructure strategy. This heavyweight document of several hundred pages makes independent recommendations for infrastructure required to cope with Victoria's population increasing from 6 million to 9.6 million by 2046. The number one Recommendation gives pause to communities like Blackburn, struggling to retain amenity – *'Increasing densities in established areas and around employment centres to make better use of existing infrastructure.'*

The report is based on assumptions including:

- Overall population growth will continue at projected levels
- Cities will continue to experience higher levels of population growth than other parts of the state
- Climate change will result in higher temperatures overall and more severe weather patterns
- Driverless vehicles, and other advanced technologies, will impact on infrastructure use.

The final document can be found at: <http://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/>

## **Local Planning Issues.**

**25 Holland Road Blackburn South** - 73 Local residents objected to a commercial Child Care Centre development on a residential allotment in Holland Road. The development would have resulted in loss of residential amenity. Setbacks, vegetation loss, parking and signage were issues. The matter was heard by VCAT commencing 12 December 2016. BVRG provided a written submission and contributed \$200 toward community legal representation. VCAT rejected the application.

The site is adjacent to an SLO area and has no tree protection. The developer has since removed all trees from the site with immunity, in what appears to be an act of retribution.

Neighbours adjoining the site are working with a new Council initiative "Gardens for Wildlife" and The Blackburn Environment Fund which has donated trees to replant along their boundaries with the 25 Holland Road site.

**21 Laurel Grove Blackburn VCAT Ref P364/2017** – BVRG and nearby residents have objected to a proposal to replace a single dwelling on this site with 2 large dwellings with the resulting loss of many significant trees. Council

have rejected the application and the developer has appealed to VCAT. Residents have become concerned with the gradual erosion of SLO values through recent planning approvals. The hearing is scheduled for 3 days commencing 23rd August 2017. Residents are encouraged to attend the hearings as a show of strength.

**20 Vine Street Blackburn.** - A planning application for a 4 Storey, 17 apartment development at 20 Vine Street Blackburn was approved by Council in March 2016. Local residents lodged an appeal with VCAT and were successful in having the planning permit issued by Council set aside.

**163-165 Central Road and 175 Central Road Nunawading.** - An application was lodged with Council for redevelopment of part of the existing Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) aged care facility with additional independent living units on 2 residential sites adjoining SDA aged care land.

Tree removal and additional car parking were included in the application. The site is protected by a significant Landscape Overlay (SLO).

The lot at 175 Central Road previously accommodated a single storey brick dwelling, which was demolished, along with a number of trees that existed on this site. Planning Enforcement Officers issued a Planning Infringement Notice for the removal of protected trees from this lot without a Planning Permit.

The development application was approved by Council with conditions on 15 May 2017.

**199 Canterbury Road, Blackburn** – Last year VCAT rejected an application for a large child care centre on this site. The site has been subsequently sold and now the new owner is seeking to build a slightly modified child care centre on the site. Residents’ concerns remain unchanged and the development will impact on many trees on the site. The site backs onto the Masons Road retarding Basin. The application is being considered by Council.

### **Do you have a planning issue in your area?**

Encourage neighbours to join BVRG to ensure that the community retains its voice.

### **Committee Members**

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