



## BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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### BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER No. 11

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# Panel Approves New Shopping Centre Public Meeting on Office Zone Proposal on Wednesday, 3rd October

This Newsletter brings you news on two major proposals for Blackburn. One — the shopping centre — is in its final planning stages. The second is just beginning — Council's plan to create a major office block precinct between the railway line and Whitehorse Road, west of Chapel Street. The BVRG will hold a PUBLIC MEETING to report to you on the shopping centre and, most importantly, to discuss the office precinct proposal. This will be on Wednesday, 3rd October, at 8 p.m. in the new Manchester Unity Hall, Main Street, Blackburn.

#### Panel gives go ahead to Shopping Centre

Following its adoption by Nunawading Council and subject to approval by the Minister for Planning and Urban Growth, the shopping centre now has the green light. The BVRG welcomes most aspects of the Panel Report. The residents and traders of Blackburn can now look forward to a shopping centre of quite unique design which will in many respects reflect the special qualities of our suburb. Its prospects of long term viability will, the Panel believes, be enhanced by an upgrading of the existing shops.

If you think back to what this Panel Report itself calls the "monolithic and seriously inappropriate" design put forward three years ago, you will realise just how much has been achieved. See the latest plans, which will be on display at the public meeting.

Some residents will be disappointed with one or another aspect of the report. But no town planning decision can satisfy everybody. The BVRG believes the Panel made a wrong decision to allow two through lanes of traffic each way and associated other works on Blackburn Road. The traffic situation is to be reviewed a year after the centre opens — but by then it may be too late to restore the traffic equilibrium that now exists.

We also argued vigorously against the enclosure of the new Centre. Curiously, the Panel effectively endorsed our argument by requesting Council to consider a policy whereby future shopping centres not be enclosed. A Melbourne first in shopping centre policy? However, the Panel was not prepared to recommend that policy for Blackburn.

There is yet more for you to think about. The Panel also recommends that the Gardenia Street mall of South Parade "be imaginatively and sensitively developed in liaison with residents". How do YOU think this space could best be designed and used as a community focus?

#### Postscript

The Panel Report specially congratulated all parties for their "positive contribution" to working out the fundamentals of this new

proposal, and it "thanks everyone for their generosity". Not so the Nunawading Gazette in its jaundiced editorial of 12 September. The Gazette is so out of tune with what actually happened and so ignorant of planning procedures that it cannot even get its basic facts straight. Just one example: never did the residents or anyone else take the shopping centre issue to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

#### Office Zone for Blackburn: A Mini-Box Hill?

A mini-Box Hill. That is how some people are describing the proposal (see BVRG Newsletter No. 10) to rezone the land between Railway Road, Whitehorse Road, Chapel Street and Queen Street exclusively as an office precinct. Council officers say this label is an exaggeration. What do you think?

There would be 45,000 square metres of office space, in addition to the offices already in this area of Blackburn. The total potential office area could well amount to something like 50% of the office accommodation at Box Hill. 45,000 square metres is ten times the size of the new Blackburn Shopping Centre development.

Find out about the Structure Plan and the office zone by reading the Plan in the Blackburn Library, and by attending the public meeting on 3rd October.

The BVRG has already agreed to Council's request to represent your views to the working party being set up to examine this proposal as part of the Draft Structure Plan for Blackburn. We cannot do this adequately until we have some idea of your reaction to it. Furthermore, now that the shopping centre story is in its final chapters, the BVRG seeks your directions on the future.

If you believe that Blackburn's residents need to take a major part in the planning of our future, the BVRG needs a renewed demonstration of support. It also needs people who are prepared to give their time, talents and interest both as office bearers and supporters. You? Please ring Ron Grainger (877 3348).

The BVRG executive thanks the people of Blackburn for their solid support over more than three years. Without that we would not have got very far at all. We wish especially to thank all those who have worked on subcommittees, on publicity and the many other things that have made this residents' group so successful.

**BLACKBURN RESIDENTS  
WE NEED YOUR PRESENCE AT OUR PUBLIC MEETING  
ON WEDNESDAY, 3rd OCTOBER AT 8 P.M.  
MANCHESTER UNITY HALL, 8 MAIN STREET, BLACKBURN**