

BULLETIN No 47

October 2003

END OF YEAR DINNER

We return to the Jumbo Restaurant on Friday 5 DECEMBER for our annual dinner - a relaxed social occasion to wind up another year. 7.15p.m. for 7.30p.m. \$30 a head - including corkage; BYO wine only.

We hope you can join us. If you have already made a note of the date and intend to be there - please let us know now - and no later than 30 November.

RSVP : Meg Probyn 9878 7919 or Ian Swann 9877 7084

ONE STONE FOR TWO BIRDS

If you haven't already made your contribution for 2003/4 you can send this together with your acceptance for the dinner. A reminder slip is enclosed. To those who have - and especially to those who have donated more than the nominated amount - sincere thanks.

BLACKBURN SHOPPING CENTRE AND PRECINCT PARKING

Amendment C40 seeks to incorporate in the Planning Scheme the policies contained in the Centre's Business Plan and Parking Precinct Plan and residents, including BVRG representatives, attended a Planning Forum on 8 October where this was discussed.

While the stated purpose of setting clear directions for use and development of the centre is to be commended the document itself was unclear as to how this would be achieved and included a number of anomalies. Much of the discussion would have been unnecessary had Council, as so often in matters concerning traffic and parking, first explained and then consulted more widely with those affected.

Residents made clear before and at the meeting that they were particularly concerned with the further intrusion of traffic into surrounding residential streets as a result of commercial development and that developers should no longer be able to obtain exemption from the parking rates agreed for the various types of business operations. There were strong objections to the reference to three storeys, rather than two, as the height limit for new buildings on the south side of the railway line and a number of other queries, not least the relevance of Melbourne 2030 (see over) were raised.

As a result of the discussions the administration agreed to consider redrafting sections of the Amendment with a view to presenting a revised document to Council in January..

LEVEL PLAYING FIELDS

It is difficult enough for the layman to follow the intricacies of town planning but at least the Planning Schemes now in place have a clear set of rules arrived at by a transparent, orderly public process. The recently released vision document - Melbourne 2030 - is now being used as a proxy planning document to fudge that process.

It has already been cited as a reason to support acceptance of a local planning application and to help justify the proposed C40 Amendment in central Blackburn. Elsewhere it now seems to get a mention every other day.

Melbourne 2030 is a State government strategic plan which was presented to the public for comment. The idea of developing yet another strategic plan for the metropolitan area is commendable and it contains a number of worthy features. One of these was to identify Principal, Major and Minor activity centres, an example of a Principal Centre being Box Hill and of a Major Centre, Nunawading. These are marked on 2030 maps and in the case of Nunawading is, as might be expected, indicated by a circle with its centre at the intersection of Whitehorse and Springvale Roads

Councils and members of the general community were invited to make submissions and comments on all aspects of the study and over time define the principal features of each centre. But this is where things start to get out of hand. Without further consultation or detailed scrutiny, councils were encouraged to develop structure plans for each activity centre. And because that exercise was linked to promises of funding the acceptance of the Centres is being treated as an accomplished fact.

The Centre which most directly affects Blackburn is what is now being called the Nunawading/Mega Mile Major Activity Centre. It is a long and tortuous story but in essence the City Council were purportedly advised by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) that they had intended to designate the Mega Mile as the Nunawading Activity Centre. (*We remind weary readers that the Mega Mile is presently defined in the Planning Scheme as along Whitehorse Road ‘...between Blackburn Road and Mitcham’ and that special zoning applies to properties along that section of the Road.*)

While this would seem to be stretching the definition of a centre a bit far, we assumed that this was still only a proposal and that no decisions had been made on what the final version might comprise. We then learned that Whitehorse Council decided to include the retail precincts of Nunawading, Mitcham and Blackburn as part of this proposed Nunawading/ Mega Mile Major Activity Centre. This is stretching the definition even further (and farther in geographic terms) and might well be seen as an unwelcome harbinger of what SOS has described as a ‘...creep of activity centre development’. (And to further confuse matters Council alternatively describes the centre as major, specialised and principal).

But leaving aside all the arguments for and against it is surely drawing the long bow when a proposed extension of a proposed addition can be employed to commend or support amendments and various other planning changes (For instance, increased density of housing in surrounding areas is just one feature typically associated with Activity Centres and on which Council has sought clarification from the DSE in this instance).

Concern has already been expressed that government planners are regarding Activity Centres as a fait accompli - and if councils are going to do the same no wonder the ordinary citizen is confused and frustrated. **[STOP PRESS: SEE ITEM ON SOS WORKSHOP ON FOLLOWING PAGE]**

3

SINGLE DWELLING THRESHOLD : EXTENSIONS

We reported in the last *Bulletin* that we had requested Council to revisit that section of the Planning Scheme which left the Rescode lot size threshold at 300 m², thus allowing for the extension of single dwellings on lots above that size without the need to obtain a planning permit. In an increasing number of cases this has meant that neighbours have been unable to formally lodge objections on grounds of loss of amenity. We again submitted that a strong message should be sent to those aiming to exploit the system to the detriment of residents, most of whom had invested the bulk of their life savings in their home and expected some measure of security in their neighbourhood environment.

To their credit, and despite the Officers recommending no change, councillors at the last meeting in September agreed to support an Amendment incorporating the 500m² lot size trigger

IN BRIEF:

WHAT'S IN A NAME ? State Government Planning information is now on the web under the heading of Department of Sustainability and Environment; www.dse.vic.gov.au

DECONTAMINATION OF CALTEX SITE. No doubt most of you saw the Press report that Caltex had agreed to decontaminate the old service station and surrounds. But, if and when it happens, that it is estimated to take at least a year.

COMMITTEE. At the AGM held on 21 October the 2002/3 Committee members and Office Bearers were re-elected for the ensuing year.

SOS WORKSHOP ON MELBOURNE 2030

SAVE OUR SUBURBS (SOS), in association with RMIT, Melbourne University, VLGA and PIA, is holding a workshop at the RMIT from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on Saturday 15 November, for members of the community concerned about aspects of Melbourne 2030.

Professor Ian Lowe is to be keynote speaker and supporting speakers will introduce panel sessions on transport and the environment, activity centres and sustainability in which those attending will be invited to participate,

Attendance is free and morning tea and a light lunch will be provided.

While the BVRG intends to be represented the workshop is open to all concerned residents and should anyone wish to attend we would be pleased to pass on registration details provided you contacted us no later than Sunday 10 November. (Ron Grainger 9877 3348).

NEIGHBOURS INTERESTED ?

SHARE THIS BULLETIN WITH THEM

ARRANGE FOR US TO CONTACT

Dear Blackburn Neighbour

You might have overlooked payment of your 2003/2004 contribution. If so, please complete and return the form below no later than 30 November.

If you are moving out of the area or for some other reason do not wish to remain on our list please notify us either at the above address or that shown on the reply slip.

.....
**TO: HON. TREASURER, BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP
49 GLEN EBOR AVENUE, BLACKBURN 3130**

√ for receipt

I/we attach our 2003/2004 contribution: (block capitals or type please)

Name/s..... Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Phone(H)..... (W)..... Email

Please attach cheque (single or family \$10/concession \$5) made payable to BVRG and crossed "Not Negotiable" and post/deliver to above address.

Enclosure: October 2003 Bulletin

Dear Blackburn Neighbour

You might have overlooked payment of your 2003/2004 contribution. If so, please complete and return the form below no later than 30 November.

If you are moving out of the area or for some other reason do not wish to remain on our list please notify us either at the above address or that shown on the reply slip.

.....
**TO: HON. TREASURER, BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP
49 GLEN EBOR AVENUE, BLACKBURN 3130**

√ for receipt

I/we attach our 2003/2004 contribution: (block capitals or type please)

Name/s..... Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Phone(H)..... (W)..... Email

Please attach cheque (single or family \$10/concession \$5) made payable to BVRG and crossed "Not Negotiable" and post/deliver to above address.

Enclosure: October 2003 Bulletin

Dear Blackburn Resident

Please help us to continue our efforts to retain Blackburn's special character. Complete and return the form below, together with your contribution for 2004/005 and return as soon as possible, preferably before 30 September.

Should you be leaving the area, or for some other reason do not wish to remain on our list, please notify us either at the above address or at that shown on the reply slip below.

.....
**TO: HON. TREASURER, BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP
49 GLEN EBOR AVENUE, BLACKBURN 3130**

I/we attach our 2004/2005 contribution: (block capitals or type please) √ for receipt

Name/s.....

Address.....Postcode.....

Phone(H)..... (W)..... Email.....

Please attach cheque (single or family \$10/concession \$5) made payable to BVRG and crossed "Not Negotiable" and post/deliver to above address

Enclosure: XXXXX 2004 Bulletin

Dear Blackburn Resident

We again seek your financial support for our efforts to retain Blackburn's special character. Please complete and return the form below, together with your contribution for 2004/2005 and return as soon as possible, preferably by 30 September.

Should you be leaving the area, or for some other reason do not wish to remain on our list, please notify us either at the above address or at that shown on the reply slip below.

.....
**TO: HON. TREASURER, BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP
49 GLEN EBOR AVENUE, BLACKBURN 3130**

I/we attach our 2004/2005 contribution: (block capitals or type please) √ for receipt

Name/s.....

Address.....Postcode.....

Phone(H)..... (W)..... Email.....

Please attach cheque (single or family \$10/concession \$5) made payable to BVRG and crossed "Not Negotiable" and post/deliver to above address

Enclosure XXXXXXXX 2004 Bulletin