



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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INVITATION

So that you may go straight into acceptance mode our first item is your committee's cordial invitation to join them at:-

THE BVRG DINNER

to be held on
FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER
7.15 for 7.30 at the Jumbo Restaurant



Choose the banquet at \$20 or make your own selection from the menu.
(The restaurant has both Liquor and BYO licences).

RSVP Sunday 15 November: Ron Grainger 9877 3348 or David Morrison 9894 2531

You are reminded that the dinner is a social function to which anyone who values the special character of Blackburn is welcome. We shall only intrude on the informality of the occasion to give you a brief update on current planning issues - and a short but timely talk about SOS (see **A New Umbrella ?** page 3).

WHITEHORSE NEW FORMAT SCHEME: PANEL REPORT AVAILABLE

The independent Panel's Report on the Scheme and its consideration of some 272 submissions was made available to Council on 31 August. It included the comment that the BVRG *"...made a very detailed presentation to the Panel and are to be congratulated on their input into the new format Whitehorse Planning Scheme. In presenting its submission the BVRG highlighted what they considered to be inconsistencies and shortcomings in the scheme, some of which the Panel shares. Many of the issues have been accepted by Council and have been recommended for inclusion in the revised scheme..."*

Copies prepared by Council are available for inspection at the planning desk of the Civic Centre and in the Libraries. Those wishing to buy an official copy (for \$5) should contact the Department's bookshop, Upper Plaza, Nauru House, 80 Collins Street (9655 8831).

WHAT NEXT ?

Council now has to consider its response to the Panel Report and to the recommendations for changes to the exhibited Scheme. Before submitting the Scheme for the Minister's approval they will also have to take into account amendments to standard schedules and zoning provisions as well as a requirement for a more standardised format for the Municipal Strategic Statement [MSS] - especially in order to clearly distinguish between objectives, strategies and means of implementation.

Many other changes need to be made to the MSS and Councillors must ensure that they have ample time in which to scrutinise the revised version of this important document.

Footnote: It was interesting to note that Council, anticipating one Panel recommendation, agreed in August to delete from the MSS all references to the 1997 Urban Villages Project. The Officers recommended deletion on the grounds that they had been advised that the concept was not State Government Policy. What a sad commentary on the level of expertise applied to strategic planning over the last few years ! The Urban Village reports have never had other than '*Background Material*' status and it seems unbelievable that no one in Council's planning department previously took the trouble to find that out.

DOES THE COMMUNITY GET CONSULTED ?

BVRG representatives have met with Council Officers to support our requests that Council publish the scheduled start and completion dates for the many 'Further Work' projects and studies associated with the Scheme, especially those affecting residents, so that as much time as practicable is devoted to genuine consultation with the community. As the Panel comments '*Many of these studies,....will assist the local community in reconciliation of some of their specific concerns.*' and '*...provide the opportunity for local input*'.

At this time we have no further details but you should watch for opportunities to have your say on the important **Housing Strategy** and the **Vegetation and Heritage Studies**.

LOCAL VARIATIONS - THE FIRST TEST

Although theoretically available since the introduction of the Good Design Guide (GDG) in August 1995 it was only this year that Monash Council became the first to propose Local Variations to several GDG Techniques (within their new format Planning Scheme). Being something of a test case a special Advisory Committee was appointed to consider the proposals and their report was eagerly awaited by other councils contemplating Local Variations

For those hoping to see Local Variations as a practical and effective means of helping protect amenity and local character their recommendations were not auspicious, being generally against adoption of the Monash proposals. Now many Councils, including Whitehorse, seek further guidance on a more acceptable process to achieve Local Variations to the GDG ie. specific to areas in their municipality.

A NEW UMBRELLA ?

The rapid growth of the SOS (Save our Suburbs) association reflects the widespread dissatisfaction with urban development controls. While some individual BVRG members also belong to SOS your Committee has been considering whether the BVRG should itself join forces with the many other local groups now linked with that organisation. We therefore decided to invite a representative to the dinner so that we can all learn more about them. (But bearing in mind that the dinner is mainly a social function we are only expecting a 5-10 minute talk - not a formal address !). We hope you will join us to hear our guest speaker outline the impact SOS is having on the planning scene in Victoria.

BVRG'S SUBMISSION IN LIBRARY

We mentioned in the last Bulletin that copies of our June 1998 submission to the independent Panel considering the new format Planning Scheme would be available to you in the Blackburn Branch Library. In fact these *Local History* reference items are now held in the Nunawading Library, as are copies of the BVRG's three earlier submissions - search for *Blackburn Village Residents Group* under *All Categories* in the online catalogue and request staff to retrieve your selection.

COME THE THREE CORNERS OF THE WORLD ...

or indeed the four Wards in which we Blackburn residents live. While the existing Council is not up for re-election until March 2000, there are moves to have Blackburn (or most of it) contained within one Ward by then. Will the advantages of this outweigh the disadvantages of the present arrangement - much criticised at the time of its introduction ? We would welcome your views and suggest you also share them with your Councillors.

1998/9 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thanks to all those who paid up promptly -receipts not previously issued are enclosed with this Bulletin. For those who may have overlooked payment a reminder note is enclosed.

We are especially grateful to those who made additional contributions or offered other forms of assistance.

' WITH CAT LIKE TREAD'

The acronym VCAT appeared on 1 July when the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal embraced the functions of the AAT. The former Planning Division became the Planning List (9628 9777) under the Administrative Division of VCAT.