



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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BLACKBURN SHOPPING CENTRE AND PRECINCT PARKING

In several of last year's *Bulletin's* we outlined the serious traffic and parking problems around the area and the protracted discussions on these which the BVRG has held with Council. It should be borne in mind that many of the problems have arisen because Council have consistently failed to ensure that adequate parking space is provided for new commercial developments - time after time dispensation has been given which results in further congestion on the roads and overflows of traffic into surrounding residential streets.

We concluded the May issue with a report that the CEO had been requested to explain why, despite Council promises, there was no consultation with affected residents, nor had the BVRG been given an opportunity to participate in efforts to resolve these problems.

Then, out of the blue, before an explanation had been received from the CEO, or from the Manager Engineering and Environment, to whom our letter had been referred, residents were sent notice of proposed Amendment C40 to which responses were to be lodged by 26 July. The Amendment would introduce changes to parking policy for the benefit of retail and commercial activities in the Blackburn Shopping Centre and, while it acknowledges the need to reduce the impact on surrounding residential streets it gives no certainty as to how residents might be affected by the policy. We considered this such an important matter that we distributed an information leaflet to those most affected.

SINGLE DWELLING THRESHOLD : EXTENSIONS

We were disappointed to learn recently of several instances in Blackburn where failure of Council to opt for the plot threshold of 500m², under which a planning permit would be required for extension of single dwellings, has been used to the detriment of neighbourhood character. Leaving the ResCode threshold at 300 m² has provides a loophole whereby, because no planning permit is required, neighbours are unable to formally lodge objections on grounds of loss of amenity, say by overlooking or dramatically changing the scale of a single dwelling on a lot above that size.

No doubt this is happening elsewhere in the City and because many - perhaps most - residential lots in Whitehorse are over 600m² will do so more in the future. Lots of that size can be readily subdivided for development of single dwellings and these can subsequently add a second storey or otherwise alter the building without the need to apply for a planning permit, thus preventing the plans being challenged by neighbours who see themselves adversely affected.

For these reasons, and because it sends a message to developers that the preferred residential density in Whitehorse is 1:300, we have requested Council to revisit that section of the Planning Scheme and to increase the lot size under which a planning permit is required. We have been advised that the matter will again be reviewed by Council.

A LEADING EDGE ?

Another disappointment was to learn that plans for development of the Leader site on the east side of Chapel Street (between the Volvo showrooms and the Post Office) had been submitted without any opportunity for prior discussion. We had hoped that a more imaginative design would have provided for a stepped building in keeping with the slope as well as a greater set-back, allowing retention of at least some of the open space and trees which are a welcome change from the usual hard edge of commercial development; one of the features which help distinguish Blackburn from other areas.

The plans included bright red facades to north and south and, not unexpectedly, arguments for dispensation on meeting car park requirements.

BLACKBURN LAKE ENVIRONS STUDY

As reported previously, submissions have generally supported the proposed planning changes although residents in a couple of areas have expressed concern about the extension of the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO). It is understood that Council hopes to arrange forums for those residents to help allay concerns regarding the process. There have also been requests to review the standing policy regarding the removal of weed species and it is possible that a meeting to discuss this with community representatives, including the BVRG, will be convened by Council

TIME AGAIN

It's time to again ask for your payment of our annual levy. While we are always seeking members willing to share some of our administrative workload we realise that for some of you, for various reasons, a financial contribution is the most practical way in which you can express support.

A reply slip is enclosed. Please complete and return this promptly with your cheque, thus avoiding the necessity of a follow up request.

DIARY NOTES

Your Committee has decided to change the timing of our end of year meetings. The AGM, not noted for attracting large numbers of members, has created unnecessary work for us, much of it related to the hiring of public venues. While we presently plan to hold the AGM in late October final arrangements will not be made until we have a reasonable indication of numbers likely to attend. It would assist greatly if those who intended to be present, particularly those who wish to stand for office, could advise us by 9 September.

On a more relaxed social note the BVRG Dinner has been scheduled for Friday, 5 ~~Sept~~ September. More details in the next *Bulletin*.

NEIGHBOURS INTERESTED ?

SHARE THIS BULLETIN WITH THEM

ARRANGE FOR US TO CONTACT