



PLANNING DEMOCRACY

The Hon. **KELVIN THOMSON** - Convenor Email: **pleasant123@me.com**

CONVENOR'S REPORT No. 39 - JUNE 5, 2024

ATTACK OF THE YIMBYS

YIMBYS are disgusting frauds. They claim to be advocates for the less well off – those who can't afford a home of their own. But the extremist Thatcherite free market ideology they want to import to the issue of planning makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. It hurts the very people they claim to want to help. They claim to be unselfish, nobly accepting higher density in their own backyards, rather than inflicting it on someone else. But they produce policies that do exactly the opposite – proposing higher density far from where they live themselves. They even have the gall to produce maps of the whole of metropolitan Melbourne, advocating higher density everywhere, apparently ignorant of how categorically this demolishes their claim to be considerate of others.

Right throughout history there has been no shortage of sycophants seeking money or influence by cosying up to the rich and powerful. Being a fraud doesn't stop you getting an audience with Governments, or getting a big splash in the media, if you are telling them what they want to hear. It might even be an advantage.

The Sunday Age Extra (May 26) devoted no less than 3 full pages to a discussion of the YIMBYS. In it the YIMBYS say Victoria's Planning and Environment 1987 Act "swung the pendulum too far the way of local communities". So much for their commitment to respecting the views of residents.

According to the report, YIMBY Melbourne has met with the Planning Minister twice, the Treasurer once, and meets with Jeroen Weimar, who is in charge of implementing the Victorian Housing Statement, "at least once a month".

THE PLANNING INSTITUTE ON THE YIMBY AGENDA

Planning Institute of Australia Victoria President Patrick Fensham: "A blanket six-storey upzoning is proposed for essentially all of 19th and early 20th century Melbourne, including over the human scale streets of cottages and terraces that the city is known for all over the world". This "risks ruining" what makes Melbourne, Melbourne.

The YIMBY proposal is "a crude approach in the form of blanket rezoning" that "won't work" but "simply result in.. a new choke on housing supply"... "Fisherman's Bend all over again".

GUY RUNDLE ON THE YIMBY AGENDA

Guy Rundle, writing in Crikey, says YIMBYS have "set their sights firmly on the destruction of the 19th and early 20th century core of our cities. The YIMBYS' disdain for these magnificent, beautiful, culturally unique areas that we have managed to save from mass demolition and freeways is nihilism pure and simple. Were you to combine their appetite for destruction with the desire for fast track approvals, you would get an inner city of dreary, grey, concrete, featureless slab-tilt, with a few shops on the ground floor.

"This nihilistic drive is matched by proposals based on spurious right-wing economic theory, that the lack of new housing stock is the product of over-regulation. This is based on a fairytale..."

"Brunswick is stuffed to the gills with new apartment builds... No-one can really look around the streets of concrete that have developed there in the past decade and say that development has been slow. The YIMBYS don't talk about this, because they can't. It doesn't compute with what is, at its base, a Thatcherite, neoliberal, ideological belief in small government and deregulation, right-wing magical thinking that is, for whatever reason, unstintingly favourable to developers".



YIMBY WATCH

The Age reported on May 25 that YIMBY Melbourne (it describes them as a prominent group, which tells you more about The Age than it does about YIMBY Melbourne) will ask candidates in Melbourne's upcoming council elections to pledge that they will not block apartment developments. Candidates will be asked to sign a pledge "to support housing that would add to housing diversity and choice in their municipalities".

YIMBY Melbourne leader Jonathan O'Brien told The Sunday Age that "For the sake of all Melburnians, it is essential that pro-housing councillors are elected in Boroondara". O'Brien lives in Coburg.



MICHAEL BUXTON ON THE YIMBY AGENDA

"The YIMBY group replicates an American organization. The name is not new, neither is its message. It parrots exactly the Property Council and government propaganda about planning controls and land supply".

Michael says the YIMBY plan is based on 3 claims, all of them erroneous. First, that there is a "missing middle", ie that little or no housing development has occurred in Melbourne's middle ring suburbs. In fact development approvals in middle ring suburbs have been greater and faster than either inner area or growth corridor suburbs.

Second, that "selfish residents and local Councils" are a barrier to housing construction. Housing approval numbers show this claim to be false. Developers have not acted on thousands of housing approvals that they already have. KPMG nationwide research shows that at the end of 2023, construction had yet to commence on more than 37,000 dwellings that have planning approvals – 11,170 in Sydney, and 6,840 in Melbourne. These dwellings would provide housing for nearly 100,000 people.

Third, that "zoning restricts housing supply". The Fisherman's Bend Ministerial Advisory Committee of 2015 emphasised the importance of strong strategic planning, and the risks of rezoning – "Rezoning windfall gains are publicly created value, and currently form a private honey pot that is prone to corruption".

Michael has been working on a detailed response to the YIMBY agenda. Watch this space.



FRIENDS OF QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET INC.

QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET FEDERAL HERITAGE REVIEW

The Federal Environment Department has intervened in the case of the controversial Gurrova Place towers, amid concerns it could compromise the heritage-listed 140 year old Queen Victoria Market. The review is expected to report back by June 21 and assess whether a more formal inquiry is required.

Friends of Queen Victoria Market president Mary-Lou Howie has described the intervention as "a ray of light". Traders have told her that the Southern Site development and the preparation for it is killing the market. More than half the at-grade car park has been closed to parking. Cars do not use the off site underground Munro parking, which has many vacant spaces. Last Sunday, customers were taking over an hour and a half to get onto Peel St!

Public comment is now open and will close on June 7. You can comment by going on the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, EPBC Act Public Portal (epbcpublicportal.awe.gov.au) and finding the Queen Victoria Market Southern Development project (EPBC Number 2024/09860). Alternatively, you can send a hard copy to **"Victoria Assessments, Environment Assessments (Vic and Tas) and Post Approvals, Department of Climate Change, Energy and Water, GPO Box 858, CANBERRA ACT 2601"**.

Anyone commenting on the project should note that the Queen Victoria Market is included in the National Heritage List (Place ID: 106277), recognized for its outstanding heritage value to the nation.

The CBD News on 22 May published a thoughtful Opinion Piece by Richard Grace, titled "Misguided metropolis: Melbourne's misstep with Queen Victoria Market". It set out many of the concerns held by residents and traders. Richard said, "in the rush towards the future, cities must not trample over their past". He said "Melbourne's high-rise frenzy appears to be a textbook case of commercial interests prevailing over community needs".

Residents 3000 are doing a Forum on Queen Victoria Market this Thursday – see Coming Events for more detail.

Thanks to Mary-Lou Howie and B. Mc Nicholas for keeping me posted re the Market.

PLANNING DEMOCRACY

Let me know if your group is doing something, or something is happening in your neighbourhood, that we all should be aware of.

Email: pleasant123@me.com



HERITAGE PROTECTION DOESN'T HURT PROPERTY VALUES

Thanks to Christina Branagan, from the Boroondara Heritage Group for Advocacy and Protection, for providing important survey work on the impact of heritage overlays on housing prices. They show that heritage listed properties tend to outperform non heritage-listed properties in terms of property values.

While there are no doubt many factors at work, such as the fact that many heritage listed properties are high quality, the fact of heritage listing doesn't seem to do them any harm.

In 1991 the Victorian Valuer-General studied the impact of Historic Buildings Council registration on property values. In the Melbourne metropolitan area, from 1986 to 1989, the registered buildings went up by an average 81%, while the average residential property increase was noticeably less, at 61.6%. In the non-metropolitan area, the increase during this period for registered buildings was 42.9%, marginally higher than the 42.3% recorded for all dwellings.

In 1992 a study of the impact of heritage controls in Maldon found that buildings which were subject to controls outperformed those which were not. The study canvassed the period between 1970 (when controls were introduced) and 1990; it found that dwellings subject to the controls increased by 1844% during this period, noticeably more than the 1432% increase for non-controlled dwellings. The authors concluded that the heritage controls had been beneficial for Maldon.

In 1997 Kevin Krastins did a Deakin University Thesis which looked at 100 Geelong properties from the mid 1980s – 50 were subject to heritage controls, and 50 similar ones which were not. The value of the buildings with heritage controls increased by 19.5%, compared to 6.9% for the ones without controls.

In 1995 The Urban Consulting Group studied the economic effects of Heritage Listing, and included a survey of real estate agents. They said "the heritage qualities of historic residential property are generally emphasized as a positive attribute in marketing campaigns by developers and agents".

The Australian Capital Territory Government has produced a Fact Sheet which says "Studies show that heritage listing has no effect on property values in most cases, and sometimes improves resale value". They cite a study by Deodhar in 2004 for the Ku-ring-gai Council, which found that "heritage listed houses in Ku-ring-gai enjoy a price premium compared to unlisted houses. After controlling for other property attributes, heritage-listed houses command a premium of 12% on average".

facebook

Become a Planning Democracy friend on Facebook.
PLANNING DEMOCRACY
Email: pleasant123@me.com



MORE HIGH RISE PROPOSED NEAR THE CARLTON GARDENS

The World Heritage listed Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens have already suffered at the hands of nearby high rise.

Developments built since the 2004 citation have had a negative and cumulative effect. There is now a tower proposed for nearby 54-66 La Trobe Street.

Margaret O'Brien from the Friends of Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens has described the application as opportunistic. There are currently recommendations before the Planning Minister, based on extensive reviews, which would stop developments of this size in this area. The application is for a height increase of 40 metres, from 105 to 150 metres, and a massive increase in the building's impact by more than doubling its gross floor area.

FRANKSTON COUNCIL MOTION ON PLANNING RULES

Frankston Council is considering a Motion which protests the removal of Council planning powers by the State Government, and encourages all Councils to make representations to the State Government setting out their concerns. The Motion "Notes the negation of community opinion and consequent disabling of democratic process through non-allowance of right of appeal in select categories, as chosen or engineered by State Government or other Planning Authorities". It says it is "essential that planning remains local and in the best interests of our community". Thanks to Sheila Newman for this information.

BOX HILL BRICKWORKS

The Box Hill Brickworks Parklands Association has written to the Premier, Victorian MPs and local Councillors in its campaign to have the Box Hill Brickworks set aside as open space. It notes that the Suburban Rail Loop plan is to increase the population of Box Hill from 29,000 now to 77,500 by 2056.

The Association says these people need somewhere to play. It says the Brickworks site is the last remaining green expanse in Box Hill, and the one opportunity to provide new passive open space and trees in Box Hill. You can support their campaign by signing their petition at <https://www.change.org/p/save-the-last-greenfield-site-in-box-hill-for-parkland>.

The Mayor of Whitehorse, Denise Massoud, says the Suburban Rail Loop could leave Box Hill with a "catastrophic" lack of parkland. She says "People need to be able to get outside, they can't just live in boxes".

Gregor Buchanan, co-convenor of the Brickworks Parkland Association, says "You can hardly call a balcony in a 36 storey building 'open space'".

HERITAGE AMENDMENT DELAYS

Christina Branagan reports that Boroondara Council is experiencing long delays in having heritage amendments approved by the Victorian Government. They have been waiting for 15 months for sign off to start the process for 45 worker cottages on Roseberry St Hawthorn East, 7 months for 20 villas on Wattle Road, Hawthorn, and a long delay for a group of 12 villas in Harcourt St Hawthorn East. Residents find this very frustrating given the effort required to have heritage studies undertaken.

Previously such amendments were usually processed in a couple of months. Anyone else who has been experiencing delays with these amendments in their municipality should let me know.

CITY OF MELBOURNE RECREATION FACILITIES PROVISION FRAMEWORK

B. McNicholas reports that the Future Melbourne Committee has approved the release of the draft Recreation Facilities Provision Framework. She and others successfully campaigned for a number of amendments to the draft Framework to better align it with other Council policies, including its Lighting Strategy, Nature in the City Strategy, and Urban Forest Strategy.

There will now be a consultation process around the draft Framework, with Council hoping to have the document back for approval by August.



NOISY MINER PROBLEM

I had a very productive meeting with Gio Fitzpatrick, who has done great research around the problem of Noisy Miners driving out small birds. Essentially they like tall nectar producing trees, such as eucalypts, and grass. They don't do so well when there is a thick bushy cover of shrubs for small birds to hide in. Lignum, boobialla, and saltbush are good for the small birds. And if you are planting larger trees, Black Wattle, Silver Wattle, and Sheokes are better value than the eucalypts – they are useful for insects, but not so attractive to larger aggressive species such as the Noisy Miner. Tell your Council's Parks and Gardens staff!

Liz Sanzaro from the Croydon Conservation Society sent me a publication by the La Trobe University Research Centre for Future Landscapes titled "Birds in the 'Burbs', Improving habitat for native birds in residential areas". It describes Noisy Miners as a big problem, and has similar suggestions to those from Gio Fitzpatrick.

facebook

Become a
Planning Democracy
friend on
Facebook.

APPROVED TREE WORKS DATABASE

Ian Hundley has proposed to Boroondara Council that it establish a database of approved tree removals. Residents could then easily check whether tree removals they notice in their area have been approved or not, and save everyone concerned time and effort. He says that Lane Cove Council in Sydney has developed such a database. It helps residents identify and report illegal tree removals, and saves Council time as well, as residents don't need to contact them every time they see a tree being removed. A good idea for Councils generally, I think.

HIGH RISE COMES TO ADELAIDE

Anneli Aueckens reports on the push to make all CBDs and inner suburbs the same. She says "The latest garish proposal in Adelaide is to virtually demolish a nineteenth century pub (two facades would be left), the Crown and Anchor, in order to build a 19 storey block of student flats. The development has been proposed by an overseas entity.... But this is not altogether a tale of doom and gloom. In vigorous protest, locals formed a Save the Cranker campaign, marched to Parliament House, and made a record more than 800 submissions to the State Commission Assessment Panel.... Public pressure has resulted in the South Australian Heritage Council granting interim heritage protection to the site, while it is considered for inclusion in the state heritage list."

SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP EAST UPDATE

Construction is underway along the SRL East alignment in preparation for the start of tunnelling. The Suburban Rail Loop Authority says it has identified an alternative way to construct the tunnels between Cheltenham and Glen Waverley. Tunnel Boring Machines that construct the tunnels are now planned to be launched from the Clarinda Recycling facility located on Kingston Rd, Clarinda.

People who wish to comment on this proposal can do so via Engage Victoria till 30 June.

ROYAL PARK/POPLAR RD INTERSECTION UPGRADE

Many visitors to the Zoo and to Royal Park will be familiar with the intersection close to Royal Park Station. The Protectors of Public Lands and Friends of Royal Park think it is dangerous, and have put a submission to Melbourne City Council seeking that it be upgraded.

DEEP SEA MINING

B. Mc Nicholas reports that efforts to mine the deep sea, and efforts to stop it from being mined, are being ramped up. The International Seabed Authority regulates the deep sea, and is meeting to consider the issue in July.

The Australian Government supports a moratorium on deep sea mining. Greenpeace has a petition on the issue, which you can find at <https://www.greenpeace.org.au/our-work/oceans/deep-sea-mining/>.



COBURG HIGH SCHOOL SITE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The Coburg Historical Society has objected to a new development proposal of the former Coburg High School site opposite the Coburg Town Hall in Bell St. The new plan is for 444 dwellings, mostly one and 2 bedrooms, for an estimated 800-900 residents. It would have 499 car parking and 716 bicycle parking spaces. The Historical Society says the development does not fit in with the heritage streetscape due to its style, mass, and bulk, nor does it have a safe exit and entry plan for the bikes. This site has had planning permits for years, but developers never build anything there. They landbank, and see if they can make a profit by getting a newer, bigger planning permit, which they can sell. No need to actually build anything.

KEYSBOROUGH UNITING CHURCH

Gaye Guest reports that the City of Greater Dandenong has rejected requests to purchase the former Keysborough Uniting Church land at 176 Chapel Rd Keysborough. The area has considerable heritage significance, and this section of Chapel St is currently at risk of major overdevelopment.



WAR ON PLASTIC

The Moonee Ponds Creek Litter Clean Ups have continued, and I have written to the 4 Councils bordering the creek - Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Moreland and Hume - urging them to take more enforcement action concerning unconstrained rubbish at shopping centre car parks and other litter sources.

The Boomerang Alliance is campaigning for the extension of the 10c container refund levy to wine and spirits bottles, as well as for an increase in the size of the levy from 10c to 20cents.



GREEN WEDGES AQUA PARK GETS GREEN LIGHT

Another of the thousand cuts feared by the Green Wedges Coalition has occurred with Ministerial approval of an Aquatic Park at 321 Old Dandenong Road, Dingley Village.

As with so many other uses being approved in Green Wedge land, such as churches and schools, there is nothing wrong with an Aquatic Park. This one will reportedly be the largest aqua play area in the southern hemisphere. But that misses the point. If you let the Green Wedges be paved over, for whatever use, they won't be Green Wedges any longer.



MORNINGTON PENINSULA KANGAROOS AND BANDICOOTS

I recently met with Craig Thomson, a campaigner for Mornington Peninsula wildlife. Craig is particularly concerned about the Southern Brown Bandicoot, and the kangaroos at Cape Schanck.

He says that the conditions put on what is now known as Peninsula Link, back in 2009, to protect the Southern Brown Bandicoot, have not been observed. This is one of the reasons why the Southern Brown Bandicoot is in such a precarious state on the Peninsula, and the conditions need to be enforced.

He is also concerned about the fate of around 600 Eastern Grey Kangaroos on private property in Cape Schanck, adjacent to the Mornington Peninsula National Park. Craig says the animals have been fenced in on the property, and that the fences should come down.



Thanks as always for your support. You can opt out of receiving these Reports by replying to this email and typing STOP in the subject line.

That's all folks, till next time. Keep up the good work!
PLANNING DEMOCRACY Email: pleasant123@me.com



COMING EVENTS

Thursday 6 June

6.00 pm.

Residents 3000 Forum,
The Queen Victoria Market Redevelopment
The Kelvin Club,
14-30 Melbourne Place, off Russell St.

Wednesday 19 June

7.00 – 8.30pm.

Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group
(CROWAG) Seminar
– Managing Our Urban Forest.
Blackburn Lake Visitor Centre.

Attendance is allocated on a first in basis,
bookings are essential.

*CROWAG asks attendees to make
a small donation at the venue
on arrival to assist it meet
the increasing cost of
public liability insurance.*

Email crowaginc@gmail.com

or call the Secretary,
on **0400 085 549**,

by 17 June, to book a place.

Wednesday 11 – Thursday 12 September

"Valuing Darkness" Symposium.

Discussing the importance
of preserving dark skies
and the environmental,
health, and cultural benefits this
brings to our communities.

For more information,
or to book, go to

<https://www.australasiandarkskyalliance.org/valuingdarkness>.



MARY DROST OBITUARY

After the death of Mary Drost in early January,
I wrote an Obituary for her and sent it off to The Age.
It has now been published by The Age (May 21),
and I have included it as an Attachment.