



PLANNING DEMOCRACY

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

CONVENOR'S REPORT No. 40 - JUNE 23, 2024

POPULATION TARGETS FOR COUNCILS

The Victorian Government has announced additional housing obligations for Victorian Councils. Many Councils will be required to more than double the present number of dwellings in their municipalities by 2051.

For example, middle ring municipality Maribyrnong will have to add 49,000 new homes by 2051, a 114% increase from current levels. Whitehorse Council, which includes Box Hill, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert, will have to accommodate 79,000 new dwellings, more than double the 74,000 it has now.

A similar picture applies in both inner and outer areas. The number of dwellings in the City of Melbourne will more than double. Beveridge and Wallan in the Mitchell Shire will have the largest percentage increase, more than quadrupling from 21,800 dwellings now to 89,800 by 2051. Greater Geelong, Melton, Wyndham and Hume will all more than double during this time. Clearly the plan is for both more high rise, and more urban sprawl.

I have three objections to the proposal. **First, it is undemocratic, and offensively so.** It is local communities, not State or Federal Governments, who should decide how many people live in any given area. It is the local residents, who live there, who should decide, and not have extra housing imposed on them from on high. The State Government has now embarked on consultation with Councils about the targets, but it is hard to take this seriously when detailed targets are announced with no consultation at all. The Sunday Age reported that "The Government's draft targets were provided to The Sunday Age on an embargoed basis, with the condition that no third-party comment be sought before the announcement"! Of course the paper could have displayed some journalistic integrity by refusing to act as a mere propaganda tool for the Government, but it didn't.

Second, the targets are based on the premise that Melbourne's population has to double in the next 25 years. We have seen enough of the Population Ponzi scheme over the last 15 years to know its consequences. Housing unaffordability, traffic congestion, declining open space and tree canopy cover. Longer hospital and ambulance waiting times, poorer outcomes at schools, more pressure on our physical and mental health. Costly infrastructure that leaves us all in debt, leaves us living in a neverending building site, and never catches up. No-one ever votes for rapid population growth, and every survey of this issue shows a clear majority opposed to it. State Governments sometimes assert that they are not to blame - that it is the Federal Government which sets migration policy - but this announcement makes all too clear that the State Government is 100% signed up for the Population Ponzi.

Third, the targets in Melbourne are much more aggressive than those in regional Victoria. Whatever happened to decentralisation? Smaller regional Councils in Victoria's west will only be required to boost housing stocks by less than 10%. The reason they have not been targeted for growth is because developers don't want to build there, because the infrastructure is lacking. What they want is to take advantage of the existing infrastructure in Melbourne - built up over decades by Melbourne residents - and not have to pay for it.

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.

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CITY OF MELBOURNE DRAFT HOUSING TARGETS RESPONSE

B. Mc Nicholas has provided the City of Melbourne's response to the Draft Housing Targets, which are an extra 134,000 dwellings by 2051 - an increase of over 120% on the present 110,000 dwellings. Council has "welcomed" the announcement - some unwarranted grovelling - but raised many issues of detail which suggests it has many reservations about the target.

It is writing to the Transport and Planning Department seeking detail on the basis, assumptions, methodology and analysis underpinning the targets, including a breakdown of City of Melbourne projections by precinct and year.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CLIMATE RESILIENCE SUBMISSIONS

The Victorian Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee is conducting an Enquiry into Climate Resilience. Submissions remain open until 28 June.

The inquiry is not about ways we can reduce our carbon emissions; rather it is about how we cope with the inevitable disaster events and changing weather that our emissions have caused and will continue to cause. Some of the issues that Nina Earl and others interested in this issue suggest we raise include -

- **cease building on flood plains and close to low lying coastlines**
- **keep arable land for food production**
- **increase and protect canopy trees and greenery, to counter the urban heat island effect**
- **reduce vertical and horizontal concrete**
- **permeable green surfaces instead of fake grass.**

You can make a submission through
<https://www.parliament.vic.govt.au/get-involved/inquiries/climate-resilience/submissions>.

INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF FRANKSTON?

Proudly Frankston is hosting a Forum on the Future of Frankston.

WHEN?

Sunday 7 July, 2pm.

WHERE?

**George Jenkins Theatre,
Monash University, Peninsula Campus.**

SPEAKERS

**Rob Adams AM, Urban designer, and
Prof Michael Buxton, AM.**

The event is free, but people should register their intention to come on the Proudly Frankston website.

OAMs for MICHAEL BUXTON AND MARKO'CONNOR



Congratulations to Emeritus Professor Michael Buxton, who was awarded an Order of Australia on the King's Birthday for significant service to urban and environmental planning, to tertiary education, and to the community. Michael's long and distinguished career includes the publication of over 80 scientific papers. Michael's award helps maintain our faith in our democracy - in quite a few countries he'd be in prison!

Congratulations also to Canberra author and poet Mark O'Connor, who was also awarded an OAM. One of Mark's books, *Overloading Australia*, remains a most important reference for anyone wanting to understand Australia's population issues.

KHALIL GIBRAN
*"Safeguarding the rights
of others is the most noble
and beautiful end of a
human being".*

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SURVEY

Thanks to Liz Sanzaro, Croydon Conservation Society, for sharing this one. People who want to comment on the State Government's targets for new housing, or related issues of planning, environment and sustainability, can do so by going to
<https://engage.vic.gov.au/shape-our-victoria>.

Liz suggests we talk about the loss of mature trees on private land, and that development is destroying our vegetation canopy cover. She says this development is destroying more mature canopy trees than can be replaced on roadsides and reserves.



YIMBY WATCH

The latest YIMBY Newsletter reports on the Government's targets for new housing. It complains that Boroondara only has to provide another 67,000 extra dwellings. Apparently, this will not destroy enough trees to make them happy. They call themselves YIMBYs, then propose targets for other people's backyards!

I was disgusted to see the Sunday Age article featured a map which the paper attributed to YIMBY Melbourne. Given the whole story had been given to the Sunday Age on an embargoed basis, either the Government or the Sunday Age was working in collaboration with them. Either way, such a cosy relationship is improper.

The Brunswick Residents Network says "Next time some YIMBY tells you that Merri-bek Council is blocking housing density in Brunswick, tell them to have a look at the pipeline of apartment complexes that have been sold out, approved or proposed". Website urban.com.au lists new apartment complexes and off the plan real estate, and there are 133 of them in Brunswick!

For the umpteenth time, there is not a problem with supply!

www.fitzroyresidents.org.au
info@fitzroyresidents.org.au

fitzroy residents'
association

Established in 1969 to promote, protect and enhance residential amenity

Fitzroy Residents Association Chair Michael Spencer has written a thoughtful article, with a strong historical perspective, on the push to "drive the NIMBYs out and run right over the top of local Councils, resident groups and anyone else who stands in the way". He says the densification narrative makes plenty of reference to Paris (beautiful) and to Auckland (where the NIMBYs were routed and developers were given open slather).

Michael says the narrative is flawed. "The only reason Paris has the look and feel it has today is heritage controls of what was essentially created in the 19th century. Precisely the opposite of what the YIMBY narrative is saying. They want to rip down 19th and early 20th century precincts."

As for Auckland, recent data shows no improvement in housing affordability. "Auckland is following a similar trend to most other cities, including Australia, with increasing costs, falling housing starts, and increasing prices and rents". Developers have done well from open slather, but no-one else.

Finally, Michael notes that abolishing heritage controls is an outdated idea from the 1960s, when developers tried to rip up tram lines, redevelop Sydney's Rocks, and demolish Melbourne's Regent and Brisbane's Bellevue Hotel. **You can read the full article in TheFifthEstate (11 June 2024) – "Upzoning and abolishing heritage won't turn inner Melbourne into Paris".**



FRIENDS OF QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET INC.

1. Chaos for traders and shoppers. Friends of Queen Victoria Market President Mary- Lou Howie has written to Melbourne City Council about the chaos being caused by preparations for the Gurrova Place development on Franklin Street. Traders have been banned from parking in the Market carparks. The Franklin St car park exit is now closed, leading to massive delays for customers trying to exit the car park. A large part of the open air carpark is now a work site. The Testing Grounds site on the car park has been vacant for 6 months, taking up potential car parking spaces.

Customers prefer the open air car park to the off site, underground, Munro car park. Customers and traders feel unsafe in the car park – it does have CCTV cameras, which Mary-Lou says would enable you to watch your own mugging later!

2. The Friends of Queen Victoria Market have made a submission to the preliminary EPBC Act review of the Queen Victoria Market Southern Precinct Development Plan, saying that one or more of the National Heritage values will be degraded or damaged, and that one or more of the National Heritage values will be notably altered, modified, obscured, or diminished. They quote Professor Charles Sowerwine: "Preservation involves more than the physical remnants of the past. It involves the things that attach people to place, the intangible aspects that preservationists call the 'spirit of place'". A Federal decision about whether the development is a "controlled action" under the Act is expected shortly.

3. The National Trust has also made a submission calling for the development to be dealt with as a controlled action. It sets out the heritage significance of the National Heritage listed market. It says "Due to the nature of the QVM renewal program deal between the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government, the proposed tower designs have been repeatedly presented as a fait accompli throughout the planning process, despite the negative heritage impacts". Thanks to B. Mc Nicholas for passing this submission on.

ROYAL PARK CONSULTATION SUMMARY

The City of Melbourne Participate Melbourne has released its Royal Park Discussion paper consultation summary. They received 1432 survey responses, and over 1900 comments from the community. You can find more detail on their community consultation page.

NOISY MINER FOLLOW-UP



Following my report last time about the Noisy Miner problem, Annette Cooper advised that she had contacted Boroondara Council a number of years ago to urge them to plant more shrubby understorey, rather than the 'lollipop' plantings of tall trees and grass, which suit the Miners.

While Council did plant some Acacias, which is good, they were reluctant to plant the shrubby understorey, which is unfortunate. The small birds need places to hide. Annette says "It's very important to have connections in vegetation, both lateral and vertical... Whilst obviously preferable to have native plants, this doesn't have to be the case. The National Trust property 'Ripponlea', which has relatively few native species, doesn't have a Noisy Miner problem, and Gio attributes this to all the "connective" vegetation. It would be great if others also approached their Councils about their vegetation planting, and encouraged them to consult with Gio Fitzpatrick.

COUNCIL WATCH INC.

Council Watch, which has the motto "Keeping Them Honest", may be interesting to people having difficulties with the performance or responsiveness of their Council. It has information and advice about things like local crime statistics, and the forthcoming Council elections. You can find Council Watch on Facebook etc.

MACAULEY – HOUSING, BUT NO GREEN SPACE

In The Age on June 3 Sophie Aubrey reported that thousands of people moving into new apartments in Macauley won't have any green space to enjoy. While the government has moved swiftly to approve new dwellings, it has sat on the Moonee Ponds Creek Implementation Plan, which would help provide needed open space.

In 2016 the Macauley precinct had 3,100 residents, but thousands of new residents have been moving in since then. Cr. Rohan Leppert said "Good planning is more than housing supply alone". Cr Nick Reece said the lack of response from the State Government was "extremely frustrating". The Capital City Trail had been closed at the creek back in 2019, and there is still no reopening date in sight. Thanks to Darryn Hartnett and Ian Hundley for pointing out this one.

DUCK SHOOTING

Glynn Jarrett, writing in the Midland Express, applauds the Government's efforts to combat domestic violence, but says they are inconsistent with continuing to have a duck shooting season, and with evidence of a link between animal cruelty and domestic violence.

"Research has shown violence towards animals is a strong predictor of violence against humans, especially intimate partners". Thanks to Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting for this one.

BROLGAS IN THE WESTERN DISTRICT

Ian Penna has been campaigning to protect Brolgas from wind turbines and other energy infrastructure. He says the present buffer zones and protections for Brolgas, an iconic species, in the Western District are inadequate.

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BABY BOOMERS TOLD TO LEAVE AUSTRALIA

Now why didn't I think of this. Suburbtrends (news.com.au, June 6) is urging Australians aged between 67 and 77 to move overseas, and release their homes into the rental pool. Kent Lardner, their founder, says that if 10% of retirees participated, 130,000 homes would be brought into the rental market. He says Southeast Asia's significantly lower cost of living makes it an ideal destination for retirees.

What a crack up! If our public debate gets any sillier, I might do it myself. I'm in the age group they suggest do it. They don't give the number of people they want to leave to free up 137,000 homes, but let's assume you need 2 people to leave to free up a dwelling, ie 274,000. This is much less than the number of extra people the Federal Government has been bringing in each year since the pandemic. So 274,000 Australian retirees are supposed to go and live in Southeast Asia, so 274,000 people from Southeast Asia can come and live in homes here!

It is nuts. Indeed, if it actually happened, it would be five minutes before the growth and development juggernaut demanded an even bigger increase in our migration intake, to make up for the people who had left! Thanks to Sandra Alexander and Vita Mezzatesta for giving me that gem.

SOUTHERN BROWN BANDICOOTS

Craig Thomson and Cameron Brown are urging the Federal Government to acknowledge that the EPBC Act approval for the construction of what is now known as Peninsula Link has failed to protect the Southern Brown Bandicoot. They want a predator proof fence and the reintroduction of the bandicoot in The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve, and management of that reserve moved back from Parks Victoria to Frankston Council.



BOROONDARA COUNCIL APPROVES 12 STOREY TOWER AT CAMBERWELL JUNCTION

Boroondara Council has approved a new 12 storey commercial and residential development at Camberwell Junction (699 Burke Road). Time will tell as to whether this becomes a precedent for other high rise in the area, but this building will certainly alter the character of the Junction.

SECURING THE NOBLE PARK RIVER RED GUMS

Gaye Guest reports that residents are calling on the City of Greater Dandenong to buy 51A Douglas Street Noble Park, to both save its River Red Gums, and create a much needed park in Noble Park for generations to come.

Isabelle Nash, President of the Greater Dandenong Environment Group, says "Council's own Open Space Strategy highlights the need for more open space in central Noble Park due to increased population density in and around the Noble Park Activity Centre".



WESTERN PORT WOODLANDS

The Victorian National Parks Association is urging the State Government to buy the former Holden Proving Ground in Lang Lang, which is back on the market. It is the largest patch of remnant native vegetation in the Western Port Woodlands. The Western Port Woodlands are a remarkable oasis of important habitat in one of the most cleared regions of Victoria. A Bass Coast National Park would protect the irreplaceable natural values of the woodlands.

ILLEGAL MOUNTAIN BIKE TRACKS

The Victorian National Parks Association reports that illegal mountain bike tracks threaten the biodiversity and heritage values of Box-Ironbark forests around Bendigo. They estimate that 177km of tracks have been constructed throughout the Greater Bendigo National Park, Bendigo Regional Park, and nearby public land. They say that to date Parks Victoria, which has only two rangers to cover the Bendigo region, has been ineffective in preventing habitat loss and destruction wrought by illegal track construction and use.

SANDOWN RACECOURSE FLOODING ISSUE

Sandown Racecourse has been a horse racing track since 1888 and hosted motor sports since the 1960s. Melbourne Racing Club now wants to develop it into a new suburb of 7,500 homes. It would be built in stages over the next 20 years, with apartment developments up to 12 storeys high.

Melbourne Water, South East Water, and Greater Dandenong Council, have all expressed concern about run off from storm water, and from Mile Creek and the Police Road main drain. The Council says these issues need to be dealt with before house building starts.

Council says it would be wrong to rezone the land before a stormwater master plan is signed off, and that flood mapping for the area needs to be up to date.

Thanks to Ian Stewart for forwarding an article in The Age by Rachel Dexter (June 17) reporting on this issue.



2024 AWARDS

The Volunteering Victoria Awards are run by Volunteering Victoria with support from the Victorian Government. They are an opportunity to recognize and thank Victorian volunteers for the incredible contributions they make to our local communities. Nominations for the awards close on 22 July. The Volunteering Victoria website has the information you need to make a nomination.

WAR ON PLASTIC

I've been doing regular clean ups along the Moonee Ponds Creek. I think the ban on single use plastics and the container deposit legislation is helping, but the continuing amount of litter is disappointing. Litter near sportsgrounds is an ongoing issue.

The Westbreen Primary School did a great project encouraging awareness among primary school children of the way litter goes from our streets to our waterways, and the impact it has on marine life when it gets there.



NORMAN LODGE GATEHOUSE MOUNT ELIZA

Local residents are concerned that the gatehouse at Norman Lodge, Mount Eliza, which has heritage significance, is being neglected, and is at risk of demolition through neglect. They have written to Heritage Victoria and the Mornington Peninsula Shire seeking to ensure that the obligation to protect the building is enforced. Thanks to Steve Karakitsos and Sheila Newman for this advice.



COMING EVENTS

Thursday 18 July

2.45 -5.30pm.

From the Ground Up – Film Festival. Melbourne Water and Grassland Films will be presenting eight inspiring environmental volunteer stories from across the Melbourne Water region, plus a guest panel.

The event is free, but tickets are required.

(events.humanitix.com, or through Melbourne Water).

Where
Cinema Nova
380 Lygon Street, Carlton.

NEW CAR SALES

When I point out to planners and environmental groups that densifying Melbourne is leading to traffic congestion, increased greenhouse emissions from cars, and various other unhappy outcomes, they say the answer is to get people out of their cars and into public transport and so called "active" transport – walking and riding bikes.

A lot of planning policy, such as allowing developers to get away with not providing car parking spaces on site, and ever decreasing speed limits for cars, is based on this theory. In truth, we've had decades of it as the express or implied rationale for much of our planning.

Theory is one thing. But reality is another matter altogether. Macrobusiness reports that the new car sales for May broke all records. In May, 111,099 vehicles were sold, exceeding last year's (record) high of 105,694. Year to date sales are 512,753, up over 55,920 over the same period last year (456,833). Anti-car planning is not deterring motorists. It is just making their lives more miserable. One more reason why the ruled don't have a high opinion of their rulers.

Paul Micallef Photography
Norman Lodge Gatehouse, Mt Eliza.



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That's all folks, till next time. Keep up the good work!
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