

****CALL TO ACTION FROM THE BLACKBURN COMMUNITY****

Dear Neighbour,

Re: Application for Planning Permit for Use and Construction of a Child Care Centre, Vegetation removal and alteration of access to a road Zone, Category 1.

Address: 199 Canterbury Road, Blackburn 3130.

Application No. WH/2016/1193

You may have received a notice or seen the notice of **Application for Planning Permit** erected for public exhibition on the above property. I **urge you to object to this proposal** as approval of this proposal will set a precedent for the entire SLO-2.

Summary of proposal:

- **138 Children 0-6 years and over**
- **30 plus staff**
- **In a Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Bush Environment and in the SLO-2**
- **Underground Car Park**
- **Tree canopy loss with removal of large trees**
- **No space for tall tree replacement**
- **Overdevelopment of the site**
- **Site coverage includes large building, concreting, waste area, shade sails and Soft Fall rubberised surfacing**
- **Risk management issue for remaining trees and tree replacement**

It was only 12 months ago, VCAT determined that a childcare centre of 120 children was an inappropriate development for the character and zoning of this area in the SLO-2. Now, there is a new proposal from a new owner and we need to object. This proposal is a major commercial venture for 138 children and is larger and more intrusive than the previous application!

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Application for the construction and use of a 138 place Long Day Childcare centre:

The proposed site is in the **SLO-2**. It has many tall canopy trees on the property. In contrast, the house on the East side has been completely denuded of vegetation with the exception of 2 trees.

The site is surrounded by residential homes nestled into a treed environment. It also abuts the Masons Road Basin which provides passive recreation in a treed public open space and is very popular with people walking their dogs. The Community, the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society and the Blackburn Village Residents Group have been working with Melbourne Water to enhance the fauna and flora in this reserve with the planting of an additional 500 plants and trees and the development of 2 wetlands.

The application includes substantial vegetation removal, including large protected trees, the erection of a substantial building, basement car parking, concreting and manmade soft fall surfacing which does not allow for significant revegetation in the future.

For some of you, this particular proposal may not directly affect you. However, it will become a dangerous precedent for this very special area if it is approved. It is within an area zoned as a Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Bush Environment and is in the **Significant Landscape Overlay-2 (SLO-2)**, where we reside because we love the treed nature of the neighbourhood and

its associated birdlife. It is a neighbourhood that is a great community of people who care about each other and the environment in which they live. The treed nature adds value to the price of property as it is increasingly a scarce commodity 18 km's from the CBD.

For many of you in the vicinity of this proposal, this will definitely affect you significantly. The impact will include, but not be limited to, increased traffic, major car parking in neighbourhood streets, vegetation loss, increased noise and waste trucks, a visual scar for those residents overlooking it from Halley and Dickens Streets and tree canopy loss.

WHAT WE ALL NEED TO DO?

We need as many objections as possible! Please find attached an **Objection to a Planning Application Form** to make it easier for you to object. Objections need to be submitted to the City of Whitehorse preferably by 1st May or soon after and can be lodged online, by post or in person. City of Whitehorse will accept objections up until they make a decision on this proposal which will be after this date. Late objections may still be accepted but we are encouraging you to submit by May 1st.

Important note: residents who object to the City of Whitehorse about this proposal will be included in further Council negotiations and further communication about this development.

If you do decide to object, please reject the proposal outright at this stage and do not attempt to think up suggestions to make the proposal more acceptable. It is not the role of residents to re-engineer the proposal.

As many of you are busy, I have included some suggested grounds of objection below. However, you need to fill in your own objection form (attached) or write your own letter. Feel free to cut and paste any of the issues.

GROUND'S FOR OBJECTION

1. It is inappropriate to have a large commercial development in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Bush Environment and in the SLO-2 Zone:

This special area of Blackburn is zoned under the current planning scheme to protect vegetation, especially the large tree canopy to provide a buffer zone for the 6 national trust classified streets and to provide protection for the beautiful Blackburn Lake and Blackburn Creeklands, where many residents love to walk and bird watch regularly. It also provides protection for the Masons Road Basin which adjoins the proposal.

It was the work of many residents in the past that has resulted in this landscape protection overlay, designed to protect vegetation and tall trees in this area. This planning protection recognised the fact that the tree canopy and associated flight paths for birdlife are reliant on trees that are both in public open space but are also abundant in private property. Many of these trees are over 100 years old.

Birds are already rapidly disappearing and the Bellbird area of Blackburn no longer has Bellbirds and many other smaller species of birds are less common than in the past.

Since the SLO-2 was gazetted in the 1980's, there has been no **commercial development on the North side of Canterbury Road**. The SLO-2 crosses Canterbury road to encompass Drummond Street and Canterbury Road. The south side of Canterbury Road have small medical clinics in mostly pre-existing houses. **The only exceptions are the Osteopath and Covenant House which were in operation prior to the SLO-2 being gazetted under a former name.**

It is surrounded by residential standalone homes and should remain as a residential area. This proposal would form a risky precedent on the North side of Canterbury Road in the SLO-2. The land size is large and many of these properties back onto the Masons Road Basin.

2. Significant Vegetation Removal

The development application includes the **removal of 12 trees and the severe pruning of 1 tree in the Masons Road Basin. It recommends the retention of 2 pittosporum that are classed as a weed species in this area.**

10 trees were removed from this property over 3 years ago with a Council permit conditional on replanting. 6 trees that were replanted are still less than 3 metres high. They are too small to warrant protection during a building period and can be removed without a permit. Further loss of the remaining tall trees will put another large hole in the tree canopy and will take another 50 years to replace.

The City of Melbourne is developing Urban forests to cool inner Melbourne and to provide the lungs of the city. So it is nonsensical to be cutting down indigenous old growth vegetation that takes 50 to 100 years to replace.

Trees also increase the market value and amenity of properties, so property in this area costs 50% more than outside the SLO area. Trees add market value to homes and open spaces.

3. Commercial Child Care Operators are risk averse regarding large trees

Commercial operators of childcare are risk averse when it comes to trees, both on their site and on adjoining sites. The arborist's report mentions this specifically, so further tall canopy planting will not be possible. There is also mention of cutting back to the fence line any overhanging trees from the Masons Road Basin.

4. Traffic and Parking

a) Major parking problems and chaos in nearby neighbourhood streets

This proposal includes 30 car parking spaces, with 12 tandem spaces for staff including a disabled car space. One staff member is required for every 4 children under the age of 2 years and one staff worker for every 11 children over 3 years of age until school age. There will be over 30- 35 staff for 138 children plus management/administration staff. It is clear that tandem car spaces are inconvenient as early workers will be hemmed in from staff parking behind them. There will definitely staff overflow parking for such a large number of children.

Canterbury Road is far too dangerous to allow all day car parking or even drop off zones. Staff will park in neighbouring residential streets including **Lagoona Court, Masons Road, Drummond Street and Deanswood Road and Bolton Road.** The traffic report surveyed parking spaces in several of these streets where there is unrestricted parking.

b) Increased traffic in neighbourhood streets. including 'No Through Roads'

Lagoona Court, Masons Road and Bolton Road do not have footpaths. This is to retain the "bush feel" in this special area and to prevent unnecessary removal of vegetation on the road reserves. Many residents walk in these streets to access the Masons Road Basin Reserve which is a leash free reserve for dogs and their owners and for many residents access the shopping centre by walking through Masons Road and Lagoona Court to Canterbury Road.

c) Parent Drop off and Pick up of Children

This will lead to increased traffic in and out of nearby streets at the beginning and end of each day. This is evident in Holland Road at the Starfish Child Care Centre, only 500 metres away at drop off and pick up times. There is always overflow parking for staff. There will be over 35 staff with over 100 vehicles per day coming and going. As most children are dropped off and picked up before and after work, there will be peak times for parents and they too will use Lagoona Court or Masons Road for drop off and pick up as it will be very congested in the underground car park. This will lead to court congestion. The underground car park also means stairs from the car park to the centre. With a mother with 2 preschoolers, it may be more convenient to park in a neighbouring street where a stroller can be used.

d) Increased risk of traffic congestion and crashes in Canterbury Road:

Parents travelling inbound will do a right hand turn across 3 lanes of oncoming traffic at the crest of a hill and the speed limit being 70kmh outbound. There is only one driveway for both entry and exit and it requires inbound vehicles to do a half U turn to enter the property. There will be increased congestion in Canterbury Road at peak times and increased R hand turns at peak periods opposite Drummond Street.

e) Other amenity and environmental issues you may wish to object to:

- **Noise, congestion and inconvenience from delivery and waste management vehicles:**

Long day childcare centres provide cooked meals to their customers and they also generate a great deal of waste. This will cause more noise and congestion with private contractors removing sorted waste on a different day from residential garbage removal.

- **Security lighting:**

I assume that there will be security lighting adding to light pollution overnight. The centre will operate at least 50 weeks per year.

- **Need:**

There is currently a new childcare centre being erected on the East side of Forest Road less than 400 metres away. There are another 5 less than 2 kilometres away.

Thank you for reading this letter and on behalf of all the objectors of the last child care application on this site, **we encourage you to object to this large commercial development by May 1st, 2017.*****