



## BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER No. 4

### BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

64 Laburnum Street, Blackburn 3130

Mrs A. Taylor (Sec.)	877 4074
Mrs M. Harrison	877 4351
Mr R. Grainger	877 3348

December, 1987

## Have your say about The Blackburn Shopping Centre NOW IS THE CRITICAL PERIOD

Write your letter to the Ministry before the Festive Season gets under way.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Do you want to see a shopping centre in Blackburn approximately the size of the K-Mart buildings in East Burwood – as proposed by Stock Constructions Pty. Ltd.?
2. Do you want to see Blackburn revitalised with a smaller shopping development which has an appropriate supermarket and a few new shops, and which enhances the village character of the station area?
3. Do you want to see the Blackburn shopping centre improved only by rebuilding and revitalising the existing strip shopping centre?

If you have answered YES either to Question 2 or to Question 3, you owe it to yourself and to the community in which you live to spend half an hour writing a short letter.

If you have answered YES to Question 1, ask yourself whether you are prepared to see South Parade become virtually derelict, as happened at Forest Hill when the new centre was built some years ago. Ask yourself whether you really want to see South Parade get turned into car parking spaces, more office type developments, or an even larger extension of the centre proposed by Stock Constructions? Ask yourself why you chose to live in Blackburn in the first place?

If you have one shred of doubt – if you think it might be better to have a few alternative proposals to choose from – you too should write a short letter to the Ministry saying just that.

All you have to do is to oppose the rezoning of the land required by Stock Constructions. Then we can begin to think about alternative ways of revitalising Blackburn's shopping centre. To open up the options means writing a letter to the Ministry for Planning and Environment.

The BVRG's preliminary research shows that over ninety per cent of Blackburn households do not support Stock Constructions' proposal. We also find that many people believe the proposal will go ahead whatever local people think.

It can be stopped – if and only if you play your part and write your letter. We are sure we have the support of Blackburn residents. But we must be able to **DEMONSTRATE** that support to the independent panel, which will be appointed by the Minister to hear the arguments. The best way in which that support can be demonstrated is for the residents of Blackburn to lodge their submissions.

Only thus can the panel be made to listen. Only if you yourself write can you have a voice in the kind of Blackburn shopping centre you would like to see.

Do not assume that the Stock Constructions proposal is an accomplished fact. It is not. Its future lies fundamentally in the letters that the residents of Blackburn write.

Do not assume that your neighbours will write. They might not. At a busy time of the year, when we do more writing than we usually do, it is easy to put off a letter to someone other than friends and family. Write your own letter to the Secretary for Planning and Environment. Ask your neighbours and friends whether they have written. Ask yourself and your friends whether both of you have managed to beat the Christmas rush.

In this Newsletter we are giving you the general form of a letter. After that we suggest some of the points you might like to raise.

### REMEMBER . . .

- (1) A letter from you in your own words carries much more weight than a petition or a form letter with your signature. We are confident that all the people of Blackburn will make their views known.
- (2) You may indicate at the end of your letter that you wish to present your views to the panel in person. The more people who talk to the panel the better the chance of success. The Ministry will write to you advising when the panel will hear your views. (Indicating your wish to be heard does not commit you to speaking but preserves your right to do so, or to have a representative speak on your behalf).
- (3) Where other adult members of your household share your views, include their names on your letter or, better still, have them write their own.

### Your Letter to the Minister

Head it as follows:

**The Secretary for Planning and Environment,  
Box 224 OT, G.P.O.,  
Melbourne 3001**

Dear Sir,

### Proposed Re-Zoning of land at Blackburn – Amendment 500

I/We wish to object to the application for the re-zoning of land to build a Shopping Centre at Blackburn (Amendment 500) on the following grounds:

Here are various suggestions, should you want them, to help prompt some thoughts for your letter. It is not necessary to write about all the things listed below. It is quite enough for you to pick on one or two – or on any aspect of the proposal about which you feel strongly and which we have not included here. Remember, your letter does not need to be a long one. ONE or TWO arguments about which you feel strongly will often produce a more effective letter than a lengthy list of points. (Although the Ministry's explanatory note asks for submissions to be in duplicate this is not necessary)

The thoughts below are only sketches. Develop them and combine them as you see fit, in your own way and your own words.

#### **1. The Village Character of Blackburn**

Blackburn shopping centre has grown up as a small centre serving the needs of the local community in a village atmosphere. This atmosphere is in harmony with the character of Blackburn as a whole and helps to make this suburb distinctive. This is why we have chosen to live here. We see no reason why a commercial development of the kind proposed should be allowed to make Blackburn like any other shopping centre.

#### **2. The Size of the Proposed Development**

The proposed building is far too big. At nearly 10,000 square metres – an area similar to the K-Mart buildings at East Burwood – the scale is quite out of proportion to the intimate, residential character of Blackburn. Its high walls and quite unnecessary towers will dominate the treed landscape.

#### **3. The Design and Building Materials**

An enclosed concrete building is out of character with the open air atmosphere and the brick and timber of Blackburn. Any redevelopment of the site should be an open cluster of buildings in brick and timber in a garden setting which complements the South Parade gardens and the surrounding houses.

#### **Loss of Part of the South Parade Gardens**

Because this development involves closing Gardenia Street to buses, a new bus terminal will have to eat into the gardens opposite the bowling club. It is only ten years since Blackburn residents had to fight for these gardens when the third railway track was put in. At that time the Government supported the residents.

#### **5. Underground Carparking**

In order to build a shopping centre of this size, the developer MUST have an underground carpark to abide by the regulations which govern the provision of sufficient parking spaces. If, like the majority of Blackburn residents, you dislike using underground carparks for your everyday shopping, point out that people will be much more likely to park in the surrounding streets or use other shopping centres where ground-level parking is available.

#### **EXHIBITION TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM BLACKBURN LIBRARY**

Despite Council's undertaking given earlier this year and the statement in their October *Community Update*, you will no longer be able to view the exhibition of the proposals at Blackburn Library.

The Strategic Planner has informed us that the exhibition will be on view locally only at Nunawading Council chambers from now

#### **6. Do Blackburn shoppers NEED a centre of the size proposed?**

Blackburn is a small community which can only keep a small shopping centre in business. A supermarket more appropriate to the needs of shoppers might be desirable, but we do not need lots of other 'specialty' shops selling second-rate goods. The developer has made no attempt to explain to the community how his centre is going to be economically viable. Blackburn does not want to join the list of other places (e.g. Sale, Warrigal centre in Heidelberg) with failed shopping centres taking up valuable land that could be put to better uses.

#### **7. Possible Loss of Present Shopping Amenities**

It can't be taken for granted that we will get better competition and more choice from the proposed centre than we do now. For example, Blackburn has four butchers. At the moment the Forest Hill centre has only two, three having closed down this year. Even if the proposed centre does succeed, it will be at the expense of South Parade and north of the line. The overall result will be empty shops in South Parade (which will then have to be 'redeveloped') and quite possibly less choice in some commodities than we have now.

#### **8. Traffic Congestion**

If the proposed centre does succeed, the traffic congestion, especially in Blackburn Road, will be extreme. This congestion will be largely caused by the fact that one entrance/exit to the proposed centre is only about 150 metres from the boom gates. At afternoon peak periods north-bound traffic banks up as far as The Avenue. This congestion will force more traffic into surrounding residential streets. If the Metrail train stabling yards are approved, what Nunawading Council calls "traffic chaos" will ensue.

#### **9. Noise and Vandalism**

Many of those who live close to the development will have the quality of their everyday lives permanently changed. Some Main Street houses will look directly onto a roof-top carpark, while others will have delivery and waste-disposal trucks driving past their windows day and night. Enclosed shopping centres also tend to create other problems: security guards are a necessary part of enclosed shopping centres.

#### **10. The Books Unbalanced**

It seems that Blackburn can only lose if this development goes ahead. If it succeeds we have lost the village character of our shopping centre and the strip on South Parade; we will have gained problems of traffic and other things. If it fails, we are left with a useless object which no residents asked for, no-one needed, and which will have to be rescued by yet further expansion.

on. The reason given is that residents might become confused by the plans and that there should be a Council officer handy to explain them.

You must now go to Nunawading (or to the Olderfleet Building, 477 Collins Street, Melbourne) if you wish to see the plans and exhibition documents.

**Look at the Plans. Read the supporting documents. Remember that the developer is not committed to build a Centre according to those plans.**

**Write your letter to the Ministry. Write as soon as you can. In any case, do so BEFORE 22 DECEMBER.**

**STOP PRESS:** Conflicting reports appeared in the Nunawading Gazette of 25 November. The page 3 article referred to the plans being on display until 21 December. In fact, as reported on page 31, they have been removed by Council.