



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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With your support and assistance we have made considerable progress over the last few months. This is the time to thank you for all the effort you have expended. The Executive hopes you will have a welcome respite over the holiday season, and wishes you a Merry Christmas and a happy 1988, a year in which we all aspire to see the shopping centre proposal stopped.

INCREASED SUPPORT

One of the results of your efforts has been a significant swelling in the ranks of our supporters. In the days following the public meeting 115 residents joined. We extend a welcome to our new members. The early returns of our major survey of central Blackburn, in which every third household was asked to complete a questionnaire, are now being analysed. They indicate overwhelming opposition to the rezoning application; and many, many more people have indicated their willingness to be added to our list of supporters. The distribution of these members' bulletins might soon be almost as wide as that of the Newsletters!

"GAZETTESE" - a local dialect of English

In a recent Newsletter we gave some hints on how to read the Amendment and the plans on display. (Shortly afterwards, the plans were removed from Blackburn library.) We provide here the first steps of a guide to reading the 'Nunawading Gazette' on the shopping centre proposal.

Not a few residents interpreted the story accompanying the picture in a recent issue - of traders and councillors studying plans on the site - to mean that the project is actually going ahead. Not a wholly unreasonable interpretation. We quote:

Extensive parking around the new centre will be on several levels ... There will be a medium-sized supermarket and a range of new shops. (emphasis ours)

Gazetteese Rule 1: until the Ministry approves the rezoning - if it does - for every will you see in the 'Gazette' on this aspect of the matter, read would.

This is no doubt what the 'Gazette' claims in its 9 December issue (page 7) to be "objective" news coverage. 'Will' is just as "objective" as 'would': its use in this context just happens to be inaccurate and highly misleading. Actually, the BVRG was complaining to the editor about the adequacy and prominence of its coverage of our point of view. (For example, it would not print our announcement of the recent public meeting, even in 'Week's diary'.) That complaint was not answered.

Gazetteese Rule 2: When reading the 'Gazette', discard your dictionary and any idea you might have that 'objective' has no connection with either 'adequate' or 'prominent'.

Teach your neighbours this dialect, and send in more examples as you notice them.

NEW THREAT TO VILLAGE CHARACTER: PROPOSAL TO WIDEN THE RAILWAY CROSSING

In a last minute move to take the heat out of the 'traffic chaos' argument put so effectively by the Concerned Citizens against the railyards proposal, it is now proposed to widen the crossing and its approaches to take extra lanes of traffic.

The gain? More bitumen, more cars seeking the freer crossing - until it chokes again sometime in the near future.

The loss? Only a bit of Blackburn's history and village character.

Rob's Cycle Shop will go, along with the historic cottage. They are old, small and defenceless. If the railyards and this crossing proposal go ahead there will be even less of a special village character for us to point to.

If you are less spry than you used to be, crossing Blackburn Road from South Parade to the library or 'The Pines' might become a two-stage journey. Waiting rooms provided on the splitter island while you blame trains.

* * * *

At the time of writing there are not nearly enough letters lodged with the Ministry. PLEASE WRITE TONIGHT if you haven't done so. The deadline for receipt of submissions is 22 December.

The address:

The Secretary for Planning and Environment,
Box 2240T, G.P.O.,
Melbourne 3001.