



BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP

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ANOTHER YEAR

The New Year has again heralded a flurry of permit applications for Blackburn properties, reminding us of the need for eternal vigilance in the planning arena. This time of year is also usually marked by a number of ownership changes as people move in and out of the area - though the percentage who move out of Blackburn is probably less than from other suburbs. This is due in some part to the high quality of neighbourhood character and amenity to which the work of BVRG and other like minded individuals and groups contributes. Watch for further opportunities to comment on these over the next few months.

Doubtless those who move to Blackburn are already aware of the value of it's special character but may not be aware of the history of community involvement behind it's retention. If you know of any recently arrived or long term resident likely to be interested in supporting our efforts to preserve and enhance Blackburn's amenity, please put them in touch with us.

While the BVRG's endeavours to convince Council of the importance of retaining and improving the distinctive qualities of Blackburn this needs to be constantly reinforced by individual ratepayers, ideally to prospective Councillors at election time. (And while none of those elected are expected to be as devious as those who feature in the *Grassroots* TV series there is no harm in reminding them of their town planning promises from time to time). Authorised and printed by R. Grainger, 25 Main Street, Blackburn.

WHITEHORSE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Plan was prepared by the Whitehorse City Council in association with Melbourne Water and the EPA with the aim of identifying actions to improve the environmental management of urban storm water and protect the environmental values of the waterways.

In the Plan important waterways values are identified; these include riparian habitat, recreational and landscape amenity, stormwater conveyance and the economic effects on property and tourism. The existing data indicates that waterways are in relatively poor health and generally devoid of native species, contributing to low in-stream habitat values. Sources of pollution are identified and recommendations made for their management so as to minimise their effects on waterway values.

Your Committee has complimented Council on a well prepared and comprehensive Plan and urged adoption of the key recommendation which calls for its incorporation into Council activities and for the designation of a department, and appointment of an officer, with prime responsibility for co-ordinating stormwater issues and implementing the Plan.

The Annual Report was presented at the AGM on 7 November 2002 and is included in this Bulletin for the information of members

Since the presentation of last years Annual Report the BVRG has remained engaged in a number of planning issues and we report on these and other administrative matters. While most have been referred to in this year's issues of the *Bulletin* (supplemented by a special distribution of Council's Ten Year Plan leaflet) some warrant additional mention here.

At the last AGM, held on 1 November 2001 David Morrison was elected Chairman and Treasurer undertaking a dual role for which he was commended. Soon after that meeting we held our annual dinner at *The Jacaranda*, in Blackburn where we were pleased to welcome as guest speaker Terry Laidler, former broadcaster and Blackburn resident. We plan to retain this social event in our calendar as it is one of the few opportunities to meet informally with members.

Your Committee has met formally five times and informally on a number of other occasions. Increasingly we keep in touch by letter, phone and e-mail and as a number of members now have the latter facility we have retained a dedicated e-mail address and used that in some cases in order to contact them.

Committee members have represented the BVRG at various events, one being last July when the new Minister of Planning, Mary Delahunt, visited Blackburn. We might add that, at the State level, both major parties appear to subscribe to closer settlement around rail stations and other transport nodes - termed activity centres in the State governments latest metropolitan strategic planning document - *Melbourne 2030*. While at first sight this might appear to be a sensible response to population growth it is by no means as simple a solution as promoted. It is a solution echoed in Council's Housing Strategy and the BVRG has some concerns that unless great care is taken in applying it to areas like central Blackburn metaphoric babies might get thrown out with the communal bathwater.

At Council level we have had frequent contact with Central Ward Councillors P. Allan and J. McCallum, on our concerns about the retention of Blackburn's character and followed this up, formally and informally with the Administration, by urging progress with Amendments for Heritage, Streetscape, and above all with the Special Character Area Study for Blackburn, a process initiated in response to BVRG proposals over five years ago and soon to be available for public comment prior to submission of final recommendations.

As well as making submissions and attending meetings associated with other planning applications we remained involved with the proposed redevelopment of the former Caltex Service Station site, a process which started early last year and now appears to be nearing an end following approval for a retail and residential building. This will be a better outcome than the development originally proposed but does have associated parking and traffic problems. Parking and traffic generally, in particular on residential streets, continues to be a headache associated with most developments and is another matter which we have taken up with council.

We have maintained links with kindred groups such as the Laburnum Residents Association and Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society and have given advice to individuals concerned with local development applications. The BVRG retains membership of Save Our Suburbs - SOS - the umbrella group for resident groups and individuals interested in planning issues, and we support their role in maintaining pressure on State and Local Government to ensure that developers pay due regard to the concerns of residents likely to be affected by their projects.

We repeated our annual appeal to recently arrived Blackburn residents and encourage active participation on the committee or in some supporting role which relieves or assists committee members. In that regard we are again grateful to Ray Summers for representing the BVRG at a Traffic Safety function and urge others to let us know about special interests, expertise or facilities which might supplement committee efforts. As ever we are grateful to all those who assisted in the important task of distributing the *BVRG Bulletin*.

NEIGHBOURS INTERESTED ?

SHARE THIS BULLETIN WITH THEM

ARRANGE FOR US TO CONTACT