



## **BLACKBURN VILLAGE RESIDENTS GROUP INC.**

*Protecting the distinctive features of Blackburn since 1987*

### **Bulletin No. 67**

**July 2009**

#### **Start of a new financial year**

BVRG has moved into its third year since incorporation. The change to the new financial year means that subscription notices for the coming year are also enclosed. We have left subscription amounts unchanged at \$5 per family member, and \$5 joining fee plus \$5 for new members. Your contribution provides the funds to enable the committee to meet the costs of preparing submissions and presentations to council and other bodies to ensure that the interests of local residents are recognised in all planning issues affecting Blackburn.

Prompt payment is appreciated and if you wish to invite neighbours or friends to join BVRG there is a form for new members enclosed.

#### **Replenishment and Regeneration**

The BVRG committee has been very successful over many years in presenting a strong voice to Council and others on planning matters. This has been achieved through the personal development of committee and non-committee members in the workings of Council and of the various planning documents that are the framework of planning decisions.

The committee encourages members or prospective members who may have an interest and/or professional skills complementary to the aims of BVRG to consider becoming involved in a sub committee role.

BVRG, since its formation in 1987, has aimed to ensure that the interests of local residents are recognised in all planning issues affecting Blackburn. The local community has long identified with the distinctive character of Blackburn, a predominantly residential area in which the built environment is typically subservient to vegetation, notably trees, on surrounding private and public land.

#### **BVRG Committee meet with Ward Councillors**

The committee was keen to meet with the new Central Ward Councillors and arranged informal meetings during May with both Cr Andrew Munroe and Cr Bill Pemberton. Issues of concern to BVRG were raised and planning issues of mutual interest were discussed.

## **The Year Ahead – some ongoing issues**

### **The Blackburn and District Environment Protection Fund**

The tax-deductible Blackburn and District Environment Protection Fund, established with BVRG support is now up and running. Council promoted the fund in its Whitehorse newsletter and has included details of the fund on the Giving part of its web site. The fund also has a web site that provides information about its operation and how to donate: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~badept/>

### **Lake Road**

Work on building the new nursing home complex continues on the site. November 2009 was the forecast completion date and progress appears to be well advanced. BVRG and other community groups are urging early involvement in management plans for development of the open space area set aside along Lake Road as part of the three tier government purchase.

### **Seventh Day Adventist Site – Open Space Opportunity**

The recent approval of the Rail Separation Project at Springvale Road provides an outstanding opportunity to consider innovative development opportunities between the Seventh Day Adventist land in Central Road and the present Nunawading Station. BVRG has urged council on the merits of a broader approach.

BVRG proposed an extension of the tunnel to the west so that a linkage at natural ground level across the present rail line in the vicinity of Silver Grove could provide easy pedestrian access between north and south of the existing railway line.

Key advantages would be:

- Easy permeability from Silver Grove to public open space at the Seventh Day Adventist site and on to Blackburn Lake for future residents in high density developments at Nunawading.
- Establishment of walking/cycling linkages between Silver Grove, Nunawading and Blackburn Lake via Seventh Day Adventist site.

### **The Seventh Day Adventist School - Oval Development**

Although proposals for residential subdivision of the Seventh Day Adventist site are presently on hold, plans have been submitted for redevelopment of the school oval. These would involve extension of that facility and include the removal of trees and presumably generate an increase in traffic that could also adversely affect the adjacent high value environment zone. The BVRG continues to advocate the need for a master plan for the whole SDA site so that development does not proceed in a piecemeal way that reduces the sites amenity.

### **Shopping Centre Changes**

While supermarket construction on the site at 64-66 South Parade is nearing completion and is now expected to open in September/October, local residents have noted with concern the recent closure of several facilities, not least the Commonwealth Bank Branch and Parkers Delicatessen in South Parade and the Jumbo Chinese Restaurant in Blackburn Road. Only history will tell how much these closures were related to the present economic downturn.

Meanwhile the abandoned Caltex Service Station site (now nearing the twelfth year since closure in December 1997) has added absolutely nothing to the attractiveness of the centre. Endeavours to improve patronage of the shopping centre should include improved amenity for shoppers including adequate parking.

Perhaps that message is finally getting through to Council officers. As mentioned in our last Bulletin, we objected to the Bellbird site redevelopment (corner of South Parade and Blackburn Road) proposal because of the dispensation sought on the provision of sufficient car parking. Council refused the permit on the basis that the proposal failed to provide adequate parking spaces and an adequate area for loading and unloading vehicles. The applicant has applied for a VCAT Hearing on this decision.

### **Borderline Tree Protection**

BVRG recently raised concerns with Council regarding the construction in SLO areas of walls and fences that involve trenching with potential damage to nearby significant trees. A recent case has highlighted the ambiguity of planning permit conditions and we are seeking some clearer directions or changes to the relevant schedules.

## **Amendments and Hearings**

### **Whitehorse Public Open Space Policy – Amendment C99**

BVRG is preparing a submission to the Panel hearing commencing Tuesday 4 August. The panel will consider submissions in relation to Amendment C99 that seeks approval for a new local policy and associated changes in the Planning Scheme in order to require all subdivisions to contribute at least 4% towards open space either as:

- a percentage of site value,
- a land contribution, or
- a combination of both

### **Amendments Approved 23 July**

**C100** - Interim planning scheme policy provisions to guide and manage land use and development in the Box Hill Transit City Activity Centre Structure Plan.

**C101** - Include interim planning scheme provisions to guide and manage development in the MegaMile, Nunawading and Mitcham Neighbourhood Activity Centres.

### **Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)**

The Tribunal has recently issued revised practice notes and forms and anyone contemplating an appeal or representation can refer to these on the VCAT website ([www.vcat.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au)) under the 'What's New' link.

## **The Thin End of the Wedge(s)**

Attempts to circumvent normal planning permit requirements for social housing and school building projects funded by the Rudd Government recently aroused the ire of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), a coalition of concerned councilors and numerous community groups, a number of whom joined in a public protest outside Parliament on Wednesday 10 June. Cr Bill McArthur, MAV President, said fast-tracking of infrastructure to stimulate the economy was supported but not at the expense of fair, transparent and inclusive planning processes. *"More affordable housing options are*

important, but with 5,000 development sites expected across Victoria in the next 18 months, the community has every right to provide input."

Meanwhile, the Upper House rejected the Government's proposal to replace local councils as the planning authority in Activity Centres with what Save Our Suburbs (SOS) calls '...unelected, unaccountable...' Development Assessment Committees.

All this was soon followed by an announcement concerning the foreshadowed Amendment to define the 'final' location of the Urban Growth Boundary. Although accompanied by potential improvements to rail and road infrastructure and the protective acquisition of a large area of native grassland significant sections of the Green Wedges, including native grassland almost half as much as that to be acquired, will be rezoned for development. Only thirty days were allowed for public submissions.

## Blackburn Village Residents Group Committee

Correspondence or payments may be delivered to your nearest committee member. If there are any members interested in joining the BVRG committee, please contact the President and note enclosed Application Form.

If you wish to discuss any planning issues with the committee, please contact us by email at [bvrg@optusnet.com.au](mailto:bvrg@optusnet.com.au) or in person – contact details below.

### Committee Members

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### Enclosed

New Membership Application Form  
BVRG Membership Renewal Form