

Save Our Suburbs Inc. - New Year Planning Update, 31.1.14

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(1) Important VCAT case to help objectors to argue against overdevelopment:

Lamaro v Hume CC & Anor (includes Summary)(Red Dot) [2013] VCAT 957 (13 June 2013) was about the only bit of good generic news from VCAT last year for residents. Objectors can now follow the reasoning in this decision to better argue their own case (both at VCAT and with councils) against inappropriate designs that fail to adequately take local character and site context into account in the assessment of amenity impact under Rescode. More here: <http://www.sos.asn.au/category/help-arguing-rescode-amenity-standards-vcat>

(2) VCAT makes Hearing CDs available again after SOS lobby effort

VCAT finally reinstated the availability of audio CD's of hearings last November, at only slightly greater cost. On 26.11.12, VCAT had decided to terminate access to audio records of hearings, allegedly because some confidential legal comments might be picked up on the continuous recording: <http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/news/access-vcat-audio-recordings>

However, SOS argued at a meeting with VCAT head Justice Garde last March that hearing participants realise they are continuously recorded and would thus not make unguarded comments, and that fair and affordable justice principles demanded that participants should be able to obtain a record of their hearing quickly and at reasonable cost, as in most other legal jurisdictions in Victoria and other states. In a decision that could also help improve transparency and accountability at VCAT, access to audio recordings was restored for all parties on 11.11.13. More details: <http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/disputes/anti-discrimination/news/audio-cds-hearings-now-available-parties>

(3) East West Link and Plan Melbourne undermined by resignation of ministerial advisory committee:

The integrity of the new draft planning strategy for Melbourne was thrown into doubt after it was revealed in December that the Minister's Advisory Panel for Plan Melbourne had resigned over key transport concerns: <http://www.sos.asn.au/category/plan-melbourne-ew-link-challenged-ministers-advisory-committee-resigns-protest>
Panel chair Roz Hansen publicly denounced the government's \$8 billion East-West Link in a submission to Melbourne Council's "Future Melbourne Committee" on Dec.10, calling for Victorians to have a say on public transport issues. [Here's Professor Hansen's comments](#) about the lack of justification for the EW Link and the failure of the State Government to respond to the demand for better public transport.....(12 min audio, Melb. City Council)
[Here's the related Age article from 12.12.13](#)

(4) Plan Melbourne - update

Planners and the community in general were told there was a tight schedule for consideration of Plan Melbourne submissions because the final document was to be released in early January. We're still waiting.....
According to an email on 28.1.14 from the Manager, Stakeholder and Community Relations, DTPLI, "final changes are underway with Plan Melbourne and it will be released once these have been completed".
The delay seems to be related to higher ABS population projections and planning industry complaints that some councils are using the new Neighbourhood Residential Zone to restrict too much of their residential area from more intensive development:
<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/melbournes-growth-study-not-going-to-plan-20140125-31fpo.html>
So are we really short of more land for residential development? Not according to the latest reports from the Victorian Urban Development Program:
<http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/news-and-events/news/land-supply-reports-show-room-to-grow>
These UDP reports show 2-3 decades of industrial and residential land supply, and **a doubling of apartments already built or planned in activity centres in the last 5 years!**
So development industry concern about catering for population increase seems to be really about better access to the more desirable and more lucrative potential infill development sites in the inner and middle suburbs.....

(5) Want a speaker on planning issues for your group?

SOS can provide powerpoint presentations and talks to your group - contact us at info@sos.asn.au or on 9513 9674