



Cardinia Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc.

PO Box 161 Officer Vic. 3809 email crravic@yahoo.com.au web www.crra.org.au

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EDITORIAL

The dictionary defines ethics as 'a system of moral principles governing appropriate conduct by a group or an individual'. When ethics are flouted or ignored it is usually because of a basic human failure, namely greed - greed for power, for monetary gain, for public acclaim, and so on. Add to this vanity, susceptibility and other failures, and the rot sets in. Those elected to a position of trust in public office, particularly when they have been voted in on a set of principles intended to benefit the community at large, have a moral obligation to support those who voted for them. This moral obligation was consistently ignored by members of the previous council, and continues to be ignored by those re-elected to office. The economic arguments put forward for sale of the Pakenham golf course by this trio and by the councillor for Bunyip are far from convincing. So why welsch [sic] on our ratepayers and residents and the decision of an independent, government-appointed panel, to support another opportunistic and unwanted development? If there is a lesson to be learned from this single issue it is that the balance of power in Cardinia Shire Council is tenuous indeed, and the need for a strong and proactive ratepayers' association still exists. Only then can there be a shire-wide voice to expose and oppose foolish decisions in Council.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Six months after the election of a new Cardinia Shire Council it is good to observe the many improvements which reflect the priorities and expectations of residents and ratepayers. The necessary review of senior management resulted in further changes, and monthly Council meetings, now at 7 p.m., are open and more 'community friendly' with opportunity for candid discussion with Councillors and staff over supper.

During the coming months more improvements are anticipated, particularly in maintenance of roads and community facilities and in community welfare services, provided for in the draft budget and Council Plan released on 23 May. The budget shows the change in direction and priorities promised by CRRA endorsed Councillors, and they are to be commended for their commitment.

Some residents will be disappointed that the municipal charge has not been removed, but has been reduced to \$50. The levy will be reviewed next year and we anticipate its eventual removal. The 7 percent rate increase was inevitable as this Council has to deal with the legacy of massive debt left by the previous Council. Government growth corridor policy is also a financial burden for Council, which must direct substantial funding towards infrastructure projects to service the rapid population increase. Ensuring equity for towns outside the growth

corridor will have to be an important priority. Plans for restoration of the Pakenham Outdoor Pool have progressed to tender stage and budget provision. The Pakenham golf course subdivision controversy continues as residents wait for the Planning Minister's decision, and alternative plans for a community parkland have been discussed. The ReadyMix Quarry expansion has sadly been given approval, to the detriment of the local environment and residential amenity.

Overall, ratepayers and residents have reason to be satisfied with the performance of the new Council to date and the current co-operative working relationship between Council, administrative staff and the community. As CRRA members or supporters, we need to maintain this favorable situation and especially encourage and support those Councillors who have worked to bring about the changes on which basis they were elected.
Gloria O'Connor, CRRA President

Gloria's on her high Horse again

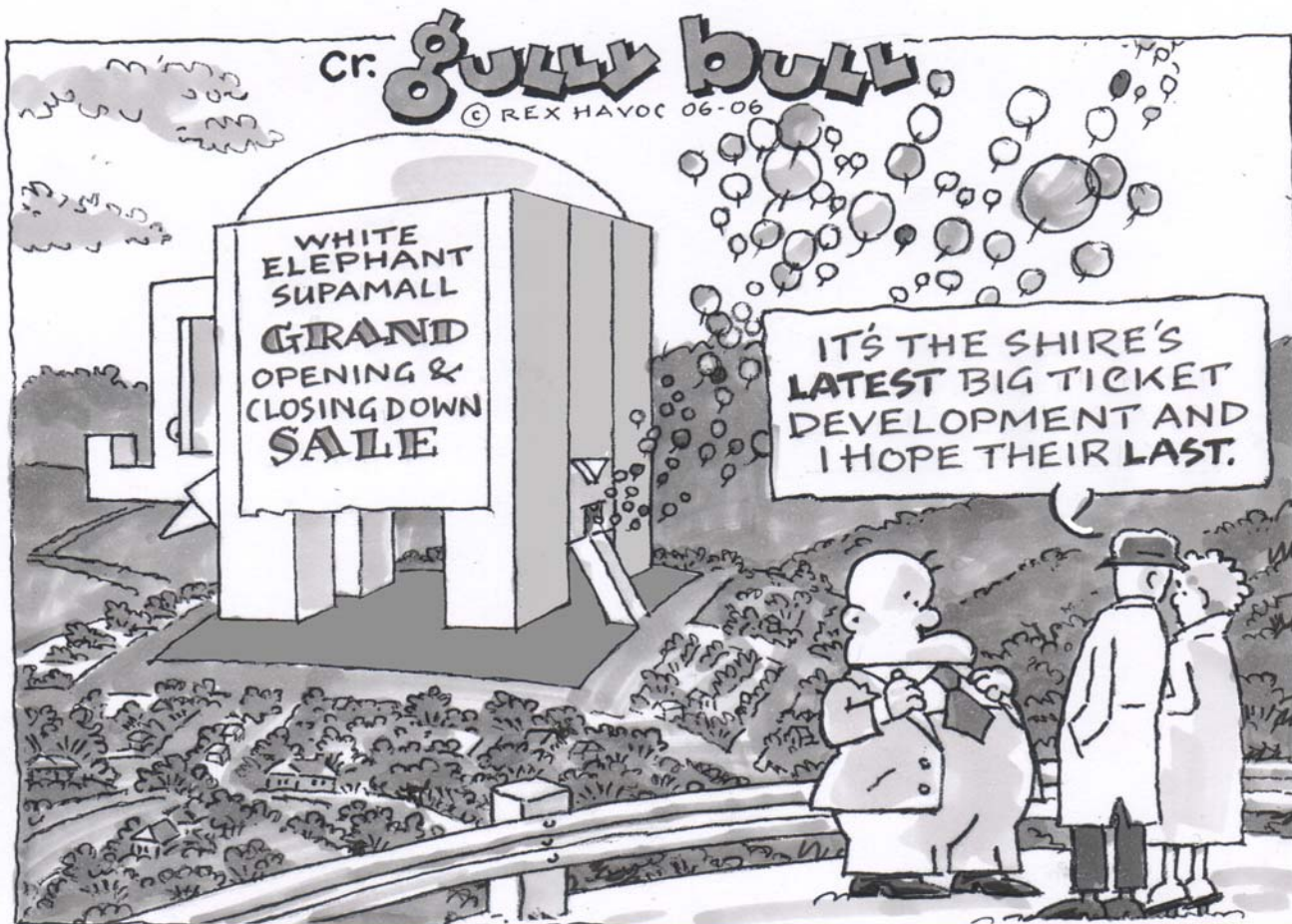


MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Cr Bill Ronald

I am pleased to introduce the Council's 2006-07 budget which consolidates and strengthens our community facilities.

With the completion of several of last year's big ticket items, including the Cardinia Aquatic Centre and Connecting Cardinia - the rural road



construction program, we now look to the upgrade and renewal of existing assets to ensure their continued value to the local community. We won't be embarking on any further multi-million dollar projects in the next few years.

Growth places significant cost pressures on the Council. Each year we can expect to see 1500 new houses completed. And this growth is expected to continue for at least ten years with some 30,000 people to settle in the growth corridor.

Every year we take on responsibility for a further 13 kilometres of new sealed roads, 23 kilometres of kerb and channel, 16 kilometres of footpath, new playgrounds, parks and reserves, street trees and street light poles.

This year road infrastructure will remain our number one budget item as we commit to resealing our rural and residential roads to maintain and strengthen existing assets. We will also begin a new program for footpaths, with \$1 million to be spent on new pavements and the upgrade of existing pavements across the Shire. We will continue the bridge maintenance and repair program with \$300,000 allocated over the next year.

The playground replacement program ensuring the safety of Cardinia's youth will continue with \$100,000 for new and replacement playgrounds.

One major feature that I am particularly pleased to announce is the decision to reduce the municipal charge to \$50 per household.

We are also pleased to have been able to reduce Council's debt by \$6 million and will work towards further reductions over the next five years.

And we will do this with a rate rise of 7 percent.

We won't be embarking on any further multi-million dollar projects in the next few years.

Our main focus for 2006-07 will be on asset management and maintenance and not on 'landmark' projects, with all our communities expected to benefit from renewal and upgrades to roads, bridges, community buildings and facilities.

We will provide \$1.4 million to maintain our existing parks and gardens and a further \$53,000 for the one thousand hectares of bushland and roadside reserves in our Shire.

We will continue to deliver quality family and community services across the Shire and will make every effort to provide these where they are needed most. To this end we have invested \$1.1 million in the new Lakeside Children's Service and will increase spending in maternal and child health to over \$725,000 per year.

We are fortunate to have a vibrant and active community of volunteers and we will strive to support these volunteers and community groups with an active grants program amounting to over \$1.2 million.

With this 2006-07 budget we focus on the importance of maintaining and renewing what we already have and by doing so we are investing in the future of Cardinia for all.

CRRA
congratulates new
Councillor Ed Chatwin.



COMMENTS ON THE BUDGET, 2006-07
Ed Chatwin, Councillor, Ranges Ward

By the time this newsletter is with you, the budget will be approved for the coming year. There is no big-ticket expenditure, such as a cultural centre, new swimming pool or shire offices, each of which would have taken capital funds in excess of \$10 million. The municipal charge has been reduced to \$50. Last year's budget debt level of \$49.028 million is reduced to \$42.6 million.

financial year would have added to our debt burden because only half of the necessary funds could be found to make up the shortfall. It is expected to be removed, finally, in the 2007-08 budget.

The debt level has been reduced but it is fair to say that there was little that could be done by the newly elected council as most of the capital expenditure is locked in from previous years. This is the best outcome we could achieve without a 'slash and burn' policy, but the interest payment alone is still \$3 million. Council will be able to reduce the debt level over the next few years, but it will mean sacrificing community expectations for certain types of infrastructure. The Shire is returning to a conservative approach to spending on infrastructure and will concentrate on the fundamentals, the 'life sustaining' rather than the 'life style' projects.

The rates have risen by 7 percent but the State-initiated revaluation of properties has brought about a reduction of more than \$20 for more than 40 percent of ratepayers. The operating costs of the Shire are increasing at greater than CPI and the cost of living.

I recommend the budget to you as a directional change taken by elected councillors rather than by the chief officer of the employees.

NEWS FROM TOWNSHIP CORRESPONDENTS

KooWeeRup: Township meetings are 1st Wednesday in the month. Venue varies so check for latest details. Streetscape is nearing completion. Problems with road maintenance, footpaths and trees are regularly reported to Cr Doug Hamilton. In April Landcare and the Cardinia Environmental Coalition held a seminar on land degradation and the effects of development in rural and coastal areas, attended by the Federal Member for Flinders.

CRRA congratulates new Councillor Brett Owen



Bunyip Township - celebrates its centenary in June this year.

For more letters to the editor, see the CRRA website: www.crra.org.au

Pakenham: Urbanisation continues its frenzied takeover of this once peaceful rural town. Examples are the 50 hectare land development at Cardinia Lakes, 600 homes on the proposed golf course development, 622 on the Fallingwater estate, another 1000 blocks north of Kennedy Road and west of Army Road, 600 homes on Syme Road, the mammoth and rapidly growing development at Lakeside with a further 30 hectares set aside for residential blocks the other side of Cardinia Road, and a proposal for 450 to 500 blocks at Thewlis Road.

Is infrastructure keeping up? Not likely! Roads, public transport, schools and parking at local shopping centres are already at capacity levels and not enough is being done to meet the needs of new residents. Good luck to Cardinia Shire Council as it grapples with this metropolitan mayhem!

Bunyip: Our correspondent sees a bright future for this outlying township as it celebrates its centenary in June this year. The Bunyip Hall has been refurbished in heritage colours and the Anzac Gardens are being fully redeveloped. Around 140 residents attended a recent meeting to discuss a draft township assessment, and a new Progress Association is planned.

Gembrook: The mood was less optimistic here as 100 residents, angry at a potential threat to the rural character of their township, attended a meeting to protest against a subdivision of a 2-hectare site into 34 residential blocks. The outcome of their protest has yet to be determined.

Emerald: Council continues to ignore illegal felling of trees, according to one resident, who after many months is still waiting for a response to a complaint, supported by other residents, about excessive clearing and excavation works on a neighbouring property that did not meet the permit conditions. Like many of the outlying towns of Cardinia, Emerald is under constant threat from the urban planners at Pakenham, who impose their concrete jungles and unsympathetic architecture on our once beautiful townships but fail to insist that local businesses maintain a clean and attractive environment. On a positive note, the new library is on schedule for opening in July.

Editor's note CRRA regrets that, due to lack of space, we are unable to print the full text of readers' letters. Instead we can provide summaries only of township news, but propose to convey the full text via the Association's website, which is . . . www.crra.org.au

CRRA. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Cardinia Residents and Ratepayers Association was formed in November 2003 by a small group of concerned ratepayers. The following are our aims:-

- To act in the best interest of all ratepayers and residents in the Shire of Cardinia.
- To create a network facilitating communication, co-operation and support among ratepayers and residents, town groups and community groups within the Shire of Cardinia.
- To function as an educational body and to disseminate information on issues and processes affecting or concerning the Shire of Cardinia.
- To work for equity for ratepayers and residents throughout the Shire of Cardinia.
- To work for accountability in the administrative process of Cardinia Shire, all tiers of government and other relevant bodies.
- To work for improved democratic process and public participation in local government.
- To put LOCAL back into local government.

CRRA



Cardinia Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc.

...AND FOR THOSE WHO DON'T THINK I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING...



HOW DOES YOUR COUNCILLOR SCORE?

Before the election last November CRRA identified the following issues as their prime concerns. Six months on, how well has your elected councillor scored on these issues? Is there room for improvement?

- Remove the \$100 Municipal Levy.
- Change Council meeting times to the evenings to promote greater public access.
- Council meeting agendas to be open and the outcome not predetermined.
- Review Council's 'in camera' policy and meeting procedures to encourage openness.
- Review operations of capital works programs to meet the community's expectations.
- Recognise community concern in local issues.
- Address infrastructure problems throughout the Shire, especially roads and community welfare.
- Avoid abdicating authority or accountability of elected representatives to paid administrators.
- Review senior management.
- Promote the interest and well-being of the ratepayers.

The association encourages readers with either praise or complaints about their dealings with council to submit their thoughts for publication.

CRRA
congratulates new
Councillor Bill Pearson



CRRA's success is due to its membership ask a friend to join today.

CRRA will continue to look for future candidates for Council Elections.

Council meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7.00pm. Ratepayers and residents are welcome to attend.

STOP PRESS
The next CRRA meeting Thursday 20th July 06 at 7:30pm Pakenham Hall.

To make matters worse we now find that every development is offered the option of providing eight percent of the sub-division as open space OR paying a Council Fee equal to 8% of the estate value and totally avoiding their responsibility to provide ANY open space whatsoever.

If we are to have any quality of life in this area the present council must take immediate steps to set minimum sized house blocks of 600 square meters and must compulsorily set aside at least 20 percent of each estate for recreational space.

David Drinkwater.



Melbourne Fire Doors Pty. Ltd.
58 Renver Road
North Clayton Vic 3168
Telephone: 03 9543 5266
Facsimile: 03 9543 5366
Mobile: 0412 404 156

BILL DIGGINS
Director

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

When we came to Pakenham four years ago part of the attraction of the area was the open spaces. We could see the potential for development but we felt that surely any development in and around Pakenham would be done with the best interests of the area in mind and in keeping with the semi-rural nature of the place. There was some development in place at that stage but there was also a lot of vacant land which we felt would lend itself to parks, sporting facilities and sub-divisions into reasonable sized blocks. How terribly wrong we were!

What we are seeing today in the area around Army road thanks to the previous council are dense housing estates with many blocks less than 300 square meters in size, an almost complete absence of parklands and playing areas, and absolutely no active sporting space.

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11-13 Beatty Parade
Cockatoo 3781
5968 8209 for appointment

PAKENHAM COLD STORAGE

110 Army Road Pakenham, Vic. 3810

PH: 5941 2444

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF CRRA.

Cardinia Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.

(Name)

of(Address)

Phone..... Email

desire to become a member of Cardinia Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules of the association for the time being in force, to pay annual membership dues as determined by the Association, to uphold the aims of the Association as expressed in the Statement of Purpose, and to work co-operatively with the other members.

Signature of Applicant

Date **Annual Subscription: \$10.00**

Comments

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Please send this form, with your subscription and any comments you may have to: The Secretary, CRRA, PO Box 161 Officer Vic. 3809.