

CRRA



NEWS

Cardinia Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc.

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Issue No. 10 April 2011

Rates and Charges - Cardinia Shire Councillors and administrative staff are currently preparing the 2011/12 budget. Expenditure items will be selected according to perceived priorities. Rates are then calculated on the basis of the amount of revenue needed to cover Budget spending for the coming financial year. Those still paying 2010/11 rates by quarterly instalment will be dreading the next rates bill, likely to be based on 7% as flagged in the 2010 four year plan. As a growth municipality, the Council will continue to carry debt in order to fund infrastructure projects required by State government policy. Additional staff, increased wages and consequent need to relocate the Shire office to a larger premises adds to the financial burden to be spread across the ratepaying community and the upward rates spiral continues. The recent disaster of serious flooding events with estimated damage cost of \$10 million to our Shire (to some extent anticipated to be subsidised by Federal Government funding) must inevitably have some financial impact on Council budget this year.

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Cardinia Shire – Metropolitan Suburb? The reality is that if Cardinia Shire was not classified for metropolitan development, rates revenue could be spent more fairly across the rural townships, there would be no need to increase Council debt and ratepayers would not be forced to sell their properties by the pressure of the urban growth boundary causing inflated, unmanageable rates assessment.

Four township groups in **Ranges Ward** have stated their case to Council about lack of value received for rates contributed and hope to have their concerns recognised in the current Budget deliberations. There has been no formal comment from **Port Ward or Bunyip Ward** ratepayers although value for rates paid could be an issue for those Wards also.

New Shire Headquarters - In July 2009, tenders were invited for provision of new premises to accommodate the expanding Council administration and Council Offices.. Indications are that a provider was chosen before the end of 2010. Due to codes of Council confidentiality, no information has been released to the ratepaying community concerning the location or cost of new premises for which they will be paying the bill.

Cardinia Shire Councillor in Court - The record shows that out of eleven charges, seven were struck out and four remaining charges resulted in a fine and good behaviour bond.

It appears the Councillor Code of Conduct does not apply to this matter and confidentiality protocols have prevented information being available to ratepayers concerning the nature of the seven charges that were struck out.

How about a bit of 'Wikileaks' in Cardinia Shire?

Planning Matters - Beaconsfield residents are consistently opposing the proposed hotel and gaming venue in May Road which is still involved in an ongoing VCAT process driven by a developer who refuses to recognise major community concern about the project.

An appeal at VCAT by **Pakenham** residents against Council approval of 43 units in Hawke Avenue was not upheld, however an order was made for an Environmental Audit and improved stormwater management plan. The site has since been sold and more appropriate development may now be possible.

The rural status of **Maryknoll** is again being challenged by Planning Amendment C104 aimed at introducing a rezoning from Green Wedge to allow for a Low Density subdivision. Many residents are opposed to what they regard as an exception to the rural status that will lead to further similar proposals.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF CRRA.

Cardinia Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.

I(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**

Please send this form, with your subscription and any comments you may have to:

*The Secretary, CRRA,
PO Box 161 Officer Vic. 3809.*

Did you know? All Victorian councils were directed by former State government to produce a **Housing Strategy Policy** aimed at squeezing more blocks from the hectare, increasing high density development, replacing generous block single dwellings with multiple town houses or units within UGB across the Shire. Many staff hours have gone into crafting this policy and the cost to Council represents dollars that could be better spent on roads, drains, footpaths, weed control and other services which is what really interests the average ratepayer!

Policy aimed at squeezing more blocks from the hectare, increasing high density development

A Masterplan for the public land to the south of Pakenham golf course. Melbourne Water has agreed to work with the Council in forming a wetlands conservation area, walking and bicycle trails and other community outdoor recreation opportunities. At present, there is no funding to begin the project and after 33 years, the future of the site still hangs in the balance until renewal of the the golf club lease is due in 2014 which will be the moment of truth for the Council to keep its previous commitment to preseve the entire 91 hectare site for community recreation purposes.

We wish Graeme all the best as he takes on his role as a Councillor

Public Icons and Disappearing Venues - The loss of the former Pakenham Hall , Dr. Cox Gardens with adjacent park (and soon to be sold Pakenham Racecourse which has provided for a variety of community events over many years including Pakenham Show and Yakerboo events) is bound to leave community activities short of appropriate and affordable venues. The compensation of a 'shop till you drop' retail premises could be a matter for future assessment.

Officer is to be the next 'boom-town' as the VicUrban land is now being advertised. Ratepayers will be interested to know that VicUrban has never had to pay rates on the massive development site due to a government exemption loophole.

Catani residents are voicing strong objection to an intensive breeding chook farm proposed to be located adjacent to township properties which would result in noise, pollution and dust generated by constant truck movement along the very narrow gravel road that services local properties and was not made to carry the potential high volume of truck movement through the small town which could be dangerous.

New councillor for Bunyip Ward is Graeme Moore, due to a By-election caused by the resignation of Bill Pearson. We wish Graeme all the best as he takes on his role as a Councillor and prepares to drive his agenda and negotiate the issues on behalf of the Bunyip Ward residents. As he was welcomed to the Council meeting, the comment was made that he had 'very big boots to fill'. Perhaps many residents would prefer him to remain in his own boots and act independently on their behalf.

Breaking news!

Location of the new Shire headquarters has been announced by Mayor Blenkhorn, Gembrook MP Brad Battin and VicUrban CEO. A multi-story building in Officer constructed by VicUrban is to be leased by the Council in 2013. No benefit here for the majority of current ratepayers from an arrangement which is actually all about State government policy for urban growth. Once again, the rural communities of the Shire have been let down and ratepayers will continue to be taxed via their Council rates. No wonder information was withheld from the community until the arrangements were concluded!

It 's not all about the CBD - Cardinia Shire is Over 80% Rural.

Places to Visit - Bayles Fauna Park, Railway Museum and Bandicoot Corner, Serendipity Lavender Farm at Nar Nar Goon, Cannibal Creek Reserve at Garfield, Emerald Lake Park and Historical Museum, Gembrook Craft Shop , Puffing Billy stationhouse and Kurth Kiln, Bunyip Nature Reserve, Toomuc Valley Crafts and Winery trail, Kooweerup History Museum, and many other rural town features.

Join CRRA and become a supporter of ratepayer equity, residential amenity and local democracy.

Email: crra05@gmail.com

Web: 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.*

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