

CRRA



NEWS

Cardinia Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc.

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Rates and Taxes. There is a limit to tax charged under government legislation. There is no limit to Council rates that are charged at whatever level a Council decides upon in a financial period of up to four years. Federal taxes are calculated on income, sale of goods and service, stamp duty etc. Council rates are based on fluctuating property values and calculated on estimated necessary expenditure, not affordable expenditure. Somehow taxes have become merged with rates due to cost shifting from government onto local councils. Until ratepayers understand they are actually paying extra tax via council rates, requests for rates relief will fall on deaf ears because councils are delivering services and infrastructure beyond their financial capacity in order to comply with government policies of continuing growth and expansion. The notion of "local government" has been officially and politically perpetuated to legitimise the cost shifting carried out at state and federal level. Government grants and financial handouts blur the reality of this situation. Ratepayers must look carefully at what they expect in return for taxes paid to government and what they receive in return for annually increasing rates paid to the local council.

Planning. The Victorian government has set up a **Metropolitan Planning Authority** chaired by former CEO of the Growth Area Authority, Peter Seamer. The Plan Melbourne blueprint for **metropolitan and regional development** will be released shortly. How this will affect Cardinia Shire residents remains to be seen. Also, **changes to previous residential planning zones** are to be introduced. The purpose of new zones appears to be allowing for more development on more lots in the urban growth corridor and perhaps provide some protection of neighbourhood character in rural townships.

A **new process for planning applications** is being implemented by councils both metropolitan and rural, and green wedge zones are likely to be affected. Residents need to know about these changes, information is available on the Council website and on government DPTLI website. Township groups and committees will have information to discuss with local residents.

Council meetings. Due to the initiative of Councillor Tania Baxter, Council meetings are now recorded, so an audio version of meetings is available to interested ratepayers and residents. An earlier practice has been revived whereby some general council meetings will be held in local towns. The December 2013 meeting was held at Holm Park Reserve, Beaconsfield, and the March 17th Council meeting at Nar Nar Goon Community Centre. These are a good opportunity for ratepayers and residents to attend a Council meeting.

Council Budget 2014/15 is now being drawn up. All ratepayers are entitled to information about the budget process and to let Councillors know that they want to see **spending reviewed, budget financial carry overs closely examined and rates increase capped.** However, Council won't ask your views until the draft budget is finalised by which time changes are unlikely to be made. Take action now, contact your local Councillor to discuss the serious situation regarding rates and spending priorities.

Local Government Performance Reporting system is currently being set up to enable residents and ratepayers to have closer transparency concerning council performance delivery, which will include budgetary preparation and spending.

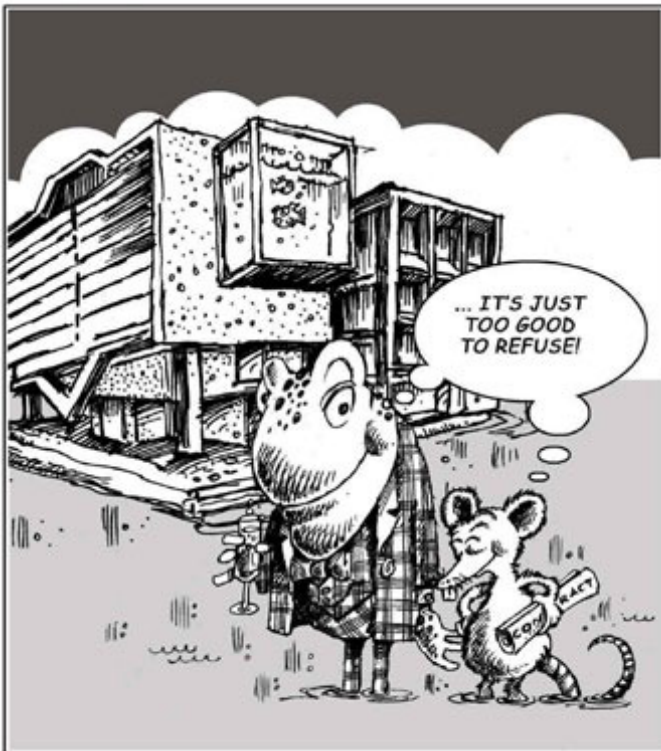
The Victorian Auditor General report noted that many Victorian councils are failing to maintain their assets (buildings, parks and gardens, roads, bridges and drains). Cardinia Shire was mentioned, not surprising when so much council funding goes to urgent provision of new growth corridor infrastructure and services. **MAV President Bill Macarthur says that ratepayers have to bear the cost of extra council spending** on improved asset maintenance. Planning Minister Mathew Guy stated that **Councils are too extravagant and should rein in their spending** but at the same time he and his government promote and approve the relentless development that is driving the need for Council to borrow and spend on infrastructure and services. How are ratepayers to make sense of these conflicting opinions?

Masterplan for Deep Creek Reserve

A blueprint for community parkland on 30 hectares of council owned land to the south of Pakenham golf course includes a carpark, multi-purpose eco building, relocated golf clubroom and pro shop, environment playground for children plus community picnic and meeting area. With revegetation, extensive wetlands, walking tracks and bicycle path, this will become a wonderful outdoor recreational open space for residents and families when funding becomes available to carry out the planned works.

Many people will recall the intensive community campaign carried out between 2004 and 2008 to ensure this land remained as future open space for community recreation. Friends of Three Creeks Community Reserve was formed to support the future vision and management of the park. Anyone keen to join FTCCR will be welcome.

FAR, FAR, FAR AWAY. IN A FIELD OF DREAMS...



Community News and Places of Interest

After **25 years in Pakenham** 9th March 2014, **Mama Rosa Ristorante** continues to provide quality Italian cuisine, food and wine, coffee and conversation. Congratulations to Rosa!

One hundred years on, **Pakenham Show** successfully survived relocation to PB Ronald Reserve (where it originally began). Well done to **the Show Committee** and everyone who assisted them in accomplishing the transition from the Pakenham Racecourse venue which was inevitably lost to the requirements of Centrebet.

Applause goes to the **Cardinia Civic Concert Band** for their performance at the Pakenham Show.

Yet to come, **Emerald PAVE festival** 6th to 13th April, and the **Yakkerboo Art Show** 31st May to 3rd June at Pakenham Hall

Sites to see during autumn are **Emerald Park Lake**, **Kurth Kiln Park** near Gembrook, **Bayles Fauna Park** via Koo Wee Rup, the **Aqueduct Trail** between Officer and Beaconsfield, and **Mt. Cannibal Reserve** at Garfield.

For a browse through local history, **Pakenham Historical Museum**, Sundays 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. or visit the **Pakenham Hotel at Toomuc Valley Rd.** where an important but little known remnant of the former **historic Bourke Hotel/Cobb & Co** staging post site on the journey from Melbourne to Sale around 1850 can still be seen.

Are you using MicroSoft Internet Explorer? Perhaps you've been experiencing problems viewing our web pages. Our web admin has been in touch with Bill Gates the new technology adviser who said he will fix it pronto! Bill too was having trouble, when upgrading his computer from Windows 7 to Windows 8.1; after C.E.O. Satya Nadella failed to fix it, Bill decided to stay with Win 7.

A New Shire Office Controversy continues over the new building for Council office accommodation adjacent to the railway line in Officer. Described by the previous Council as "an offer to good to refuse" a partnership with VicUrban (now Places Victoria) and a building company lease agreement went ahead, but the current Council has now agreed to buy the building (another offer "too good to refuse"?). The site is known for its "water surplus" problem and there has been unfavourable comment about the location being almost at the western boundary of the Shire. Now, as ratepayers note the mounting financial cost of this Council relocation, there is nothing to be said in its favour. The ratepayers of Cardinia Shire are entitled to an explanation as to why the VicUrban/Places Victoria proposal topped sixteen other tenders for new civic headquarters ?

Cardinia Ratepayers & Residents Association AGM Wednesday 16th April 7 p.m. at Pakenham RSL

corner James and Snodgrass Street. Following the AGM formalities, there will be a forum for ratepayers to discuss the financial state of our Council, the need to get back to basics of "roads, rates and rubbish", and any other issues to be raised. Nominations for CRRRA Committee are invited and can be lodged at the meeting.

Strategic Planning for Rural Towns A township strategy plan for Nar Nar Goon has been on hold for over 12 months pending release of government Plan Melbourne policy. While it appears there is divided opinion among residents about growth of their town and surrounding district, it is inevitable the decision will be made for them by the Plan Melbourne strategy which is designed to achieve more growth in rural and regional towns regardless of local opinion, see the Minister's recent decision concerning Spring Creek at Torquay.

Community Evening at Bayles Fauna Park

The annual twilight evening in the park was held on 22nd February. With a major raffle, sausage sizzle and musical entertainment, funds were raised toward restoration of the relocated historic railway house as a caretaker cottage. Performance by Bayles Primary School Bush Band was a highlight of the evening which finished with a night walk by torch light. Bayles Committee enjoyed a successful evening.

