

**unChain Newsletter**  
**September Quarter 2013**

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**Vale Sue Cleveland**

We are sad to report that Sue Cleveland unChain committee member has passed away after a battle with cancer. Sue was a wonderful person and a passionate fighter for the environment and for social justice. Sue was active in Veg Out, passionate about animal welfare and full of love generally. She will be greatly missed. We express sincere condolences to Grant and family.

**1. The Committee**

The committee continues to meet monthly. The website has been updated with a new one in planning. There is a subcommittee for the Triangle Development (contact Grant Rickey at [grickey@gmail.com](mailto:grickey@gmail.com)) and a subcommittee for Fishermans Bend (contact Richard Roberts at [richard@superinvestments.com.au](mailto:richard@superinvestments.com.au)). unChain is also represented on the two Community Reference Groups for the Yarra Trams proposals for Acland and Fitzroy Streets). For details of the progress of these see below.

**2. Membership Renewal and new members**

There has been lots of chasing up of old members and we have gained some new ones too! People interested in joining unChain should contact the President, Catherine Sharples at [unchaininc@gmail.com](mailto:unchaininc@gmail.com)

### **3. Meeting with CEO and Manager Planning and Environment**

President Catherine Sharples and Vice President Peter Holland met with Councillor Serge Thomann, Port Phillip CEO Tracey Slatter and the new General Manager of Environment & Planning, Malcolm Snow. Mr Snow is a qualified urban planner and landscape architect who is recognised nationally for his award winning urban design excellence combining commercial and environmentally sustainable outcomes. He was the Chief Executive Officer of South Bank Corporation in Brisbane. Most recently he has been working as the General Manager Design and Placemaking at the Victorian Urban Renewal Authority. He has said "It's a really exciting and challenging time to be joining the team at Port Phillip, with significant projects afoot. I am particularly interested in seeking good planning outcomes for the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area through working with the Minister for Planning and the Department. I am also looking forward to working on realising the vision created with the community for St Kilda Triangle." The meeting was positive and Unchain hope to continue our good working relationship with COPP

### **4. Federal Elections**

unChain was active in the elections in September. We supported a forum for Senate candidates organized by LIVE and 'handed out' a 'how to vote' card electronically. We correctly predicted that Michael Danby (Labor) would be returned - but with a significantly reduced majority. We wish him the best in the next term of Parliament.

Michael Danby received only 31.67% of the first preference votes, significantly less than Kevin Ekendahl (Liberals) who received 41.05%. Michael Danby was elected on the preferences of the Greens' Ann Birrell, who polled 20.17% of the votes. This was a good result for her in an election where the Greens' vote fell significantly in many other electorates.

Our how-to-vote recommendation was based on the executive's assessment of the candidates' responses to a detailed questionnaire on local issues, after taking into account comments from members. We said that all three of the candidates from the major parties would be acceptable local members but that Ann Birrell was the best candidate on the federal issues that have an immediate 'local' impact. We then preferred Kevin Ekendahl over Michael Danby in part because Kevin promised to support unChain's request for federal funding for the Palais and the St Kilda Triangle. Michael did not respond to our request.

Our electronic how-to-vote card was controversial. Some Liberals accused us of being a Greens' 'front' and many Laborites accused us of supporting Tony Abbott. Both accusations are untrue. However on reflection it may have been better for unChain to do what 'Get-Up' did – hand out a card that did not recommend any candidate but scored their answers to a questionnaire from 1 to 5. We could have done this for each of the 14 questions we asked and left it up to the interested voter to make up his or her mind. Please send any comments to us at [unchaininc@gmail.com](mailto:unchaininc@gmail.com).

## **5. Yarra Trams/PTV proposals for Acland and Fitzroy Streets**

Yarra Trams and Public Transport Victoria have plans for the 96 tram route that will have significant impacts on Acland St and Fitzroy St. unChain has been meeting with the Fitzroy and Acland St Traders, the St Kilda Park Primary School and others over these plans. In August we made a submission to Council on these plans and wrote to the Minister for Roads. This submission is on our website.

In summary, the proposed plans have issues relating to traffic management and flow, impacts on local traders and residential amenity. unChain supports a sustainable, reliable and accessible transport system. The PTV's Route 96 Project meets their mandate to improve and extend public transport, however it excludes consideration of all the other components that contribute to the success of Melbourne as a liveable city.

Criticism of the plans and PTV consultation process led Council and PTV to set up two Community Reference Groups, one for the Fitzroy St and one for Acland Street. unChain President Catherine Sharples is on the Fitzroy St CRG and unChain members Richard Roberts and Grant Rickey are on the Acland St CRG.

The problem with the PTV's proposal for Fitzroy St is that it proposed a 'super-stop' between Grey St and Princes St that would have a significant impact on traffic flows and to access to Albert Park and the primary school. It would reduce parking and limit traffic to one lane. The alternative design option we want to support is to put any new stop between Princes St and the Junction. We believe this stop in combination with the one already at Park St/Fitzroy St will provide accessibility to route 16 for commuters. The community members of the CRG think it is a good idea and we await feedback from PTV. A petition has been drawn up in support of this to present to Council and it needs your support. Go to <http://chn.ge/18dpJtu> or visit a local trader and sign a hard copy.

The problem with the PTV's proposal for Acland St is that it created a tram-dominated mall. Many of the palm trees would be removed, there would be a significant loss of parking and massive disruption to traffic flows. These proposals were designed with the sole focus on the 96 tram, with no apparent

consideration of the interests of traders and residents. There are three alternatives but there is no 'easy' solution.

The Traders Association wants the terminus at Luna Park with an historic tram on a single track linking to Barkly St. The problem with this is that PTV does not support it because, amongst other concerns, they say it is not possible to fit a new terminus at the Luna Park interchange.

A second alternative is to have a 'split' terminus – one at Luna Park and the other at Barkly Street. Every second 96 tram would go to Barkly St along a single track as at present. This would save the palm trees, enable one-way traffic along Barkly Street and also significant increase in footpaths and al fresco dining etc. The problem with this is that PTV do not support it, in part because they this option also is technically not feasible and that it disadvantages tram travellers.

Council has proposed the third alternative. It is to create a plaza at Barkly St with a terminus opposite Coles but allow cars to cross the tram tracks as at present on the city side of the new terminus. This is significantly better than the PTV proposals for traders and residents. However the concept of the plaza is problematic. It means that there would be no through traffic on Alcand St and a significant loss of parking.

There is no easy solution for Acland Street. It is not possible to 'do nothing' because the government has bought the new 'E-class' trams for the 96 route and is legally bound to provide the 'super-stops' that provide disability and disabled access. For those interested in more information, unChain will post a more detailed analysis of the issues on our website. If you are interested in getting involved, contact Catherine Sharples at [unchaininc@gmail.com](mailto:unchaininc@gmail.com).

## **6. The St Kilda Triangle**

The St Kilda Triangle was the original issue that led to the formation of unChain. We have subsequently been actively involved. Council began consultation on a New Triangle in late 2010. Ultimately, in August 2012 the Council adopted the *St Kilda Triangle 2012*. This was a vision document – a framework to guide the future of the Triangle site. The next step envisaged was for it to be implemented through a planning scheme amendment (Amendment C106).

In our submissions on Amendment C106 unChain was broadly supportive of many aspects of *St Kilda Triangle 2012* and the Planning Scheme Amendment. It was submitted that

- There was widespread community agreement with the statements about what we want and what we do not want
- The Council had successfully dealt with the issue of the Triangle becoming

- the centre of a nightclub and licensed venues precinct.
- The Amendment properly prevents any large shopping mall anchored by a full line supermarket.
  - The Amendment properly promised to re-instate third party appeal rights.

However in our submissions submitted in June and July 2013 we raised concerns about whether the responsible authority had sufficient flexibility to enable it to best achieve the vision promised in *St Kilda Triangle 2012*. In particular flexibility was required in considering:

- The possibility of link to the foreshore over Jacka Boulevard by a new parkland.
- The development envelopes and the new buildings behind and beside the Palais

These were issues that we had consistently raised in the consultation process leading to the vision in *St Kilda Triangle 2012*. We thought that our submissions had been taken into account in the final version of *St Kilda Triangle 2012*, but the way that Amendment C106 was drafted made it very difficult to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The possibility of link to the foreshore over Jacka Boulevard by a new parkland has been raised by both unChain and CAPP. But this would run counter to various provisions in Amendment C106.

The problem with the development envelopes was that they were essentially based on just one criterion: a consultant's visual impact analysis. But there are various other factors that should be taken into account in determining envelopes and design outcomes. For example the envelopes create corridors but there is no consideration about climate: whether we are building wind tunnels. The envelope beside the Palais has not considered heritage: the provisions of the Burra Charter. The envelope behind the Palais permits a small building: it does not take into account other considerations such as the economic benefits of a larger building or the possibility of better backstage facilities for the Palais in a larger building.

In July we submitted that since the Council adopted *St Kilda Triangle 2012* we have a new Council, a new CEO and a new Manager of Environment and Planning and so we should review the Council's position on the Triangle. This seems to have been successful and Council is reconsidering the Planning Scheme Amendment. We expect that this will be released for discussion in November.

## **7. Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Strategy**

In March 2013 unChain made a 50 page submission on the draft Metropolitan

Planning Strategy. In October the government released its final document, called Plan Melbourne. This sets out the government's vision for the city to 2050. In October and November there will be community information sessions are being held around Melbourne to give Melburnians a chance to explore Plan Melbourne and what it means to them (see <http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/get-involved/events>). unChain will attend some of these. Plan Melbourne is not yet finalised - it's open for comment until December.

The key aspects of the plan are:

- A new statutory body, the Metropolitan Planning Authority
- No increase in the urban growth boundary (to stop urban sprawl)
- A push to drive growth into urban renewal zones in Melbourne
- Defining which areas should have medium-rise apartment blocks and which areas should be free of them
- A push to increase regional hubs and "peri-urban" towns, 50 to 100 kilometres from Melbourne
- Development of a port at Hastings and a third Melbourne airport past Kooweerup
- Creation of "employment clusters" in East Werribee, Sunshine, and around La Trobe University; new "metropolitan activity centres" at Toolern, east of Melton, and Lockerie, north of Craigieburn; and build up existing clusters and centres at Dandenong, Box Hill, etc.
- Construction of transport infrastructure: a Melbourne metro, the western half of the east-west link, the missing link from Greensborough to EastLink, and rail lines to Melbourne Airport, Avalon, Doncaster, Rowville

The key will be whether the good ideas in the plan can be implemented. In particular whether there can be an independent, transparent, arms-length evaluations of rival infrastructure projects and how these can be funded. In Port Phillip there are two key issues: how will Fishermans Bend be developed and how will the new residential zones be implemented in the rest of the city.

## **8. Fishermans Bend**

In September the government released its draft plans for Fishermans Bend. It plans to house 80,000 people by 2063. The consultation period is open until 22 November 2013. unChain will be making a submission. You can read the draft plans at <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/projects-and-programs/fishermans-bend-urban-renewal-project>.

unChain has set up a working group to develop the submission. It will be led by Richard Roberts. We will welcome any interests to participate or comments on the draft plan to help us with our submission (email to [unchaininc@gmail.com](mailto:unchaininc@gmail.com)). We will send a draft of our submission to members for comment before we

finalise it.

The Fishermans Bend Draft Vision outlines the overarching strategic directions and key moves needed to transform the existing industrial area into a thriving inner city environment. The Interim Fishermans Bend Design provide guidance to interested developers, architects and planners to encourage good design and provision of adequate public space, facilities and access to public transport.

Some of the aspects of the plan are:

- An extension of the Collins Street tram and two underground train stations
- Plans for five potential schools
- High-rise buildings be restricted to areas closer to the CBD, with low-rise buildings in the southern parts of Fishermans
- Buckhurst Street transformed into a "green spine" which prioritises pedestrians and cyclists and connects Montague and Bay Street shopping strips.

There are many important issues to resolve such as:

- Is this going to be a developer-driven enterprise?
- Are we building enough social infrastructure?
- Is the funding of infrastructure realistic?
- What is the relationship between freight from Webb Dock and supposed residential area of Fishermans Bend?
- How can the good aspects of the plan be given 'teeth'?

The fundamental issues is whether we have learned from the mistakes that were made in the Docklands. Council has set up consultation sessions via a Fishermans Bend Explorer's Van at these locations:

- Wed 30 October, 10 am - 1 pm, Bay Street, Port Melbourne (outside Coles Supermarket)
- Thurs 31 October, 12 pm – 3 pm, outside Salford Lads Club Café
- Fri 1 November, 11 am – 2 pm, outside Industri Café
- Wed 6 November, 4.30pm – 6.30pm, Fishermans Bend Community Centre, Cnr. Dunstan Parade and Centre Avenue, Garden City.
- Places Victoria are hosting community information sessions in partnership with Council. Come along on Wed 30 October, 5-7 pm - Boyd School, 207 City Road, Southbank.

## **9. Port Melbourne**

In August unChain made a submission to the Council on Amendment C104 on Waterfront Place. This is a very complicated issue. We met with the Beacon Cove Neighbourhood Association to discuss our submission.

The issue has been various proposals for a tower or towers at Waterfront Place which is part of the Beacon Cove complex.

Waterfront Place is subject to restrictive covenants. Mirvac built Beacon Cove in stages between 1996 and 2005 as a mix of high, medium and low density areas. Restrictive covenants were applied to the Waterfront Place site by Mirvac to do two things:

- To provide for an area of low scale buildings
- To provide community facilities (child minding and a sports centre).

The covenants go into perpetuity.

The developer applied for removal of the covenants. There is clearly a need for Council to have some new Planning controls in place in case the Supreme Court or the VCAT removes the current restrictive covenants. However, we submitted that it was premature for Council to proceed at this time with Amendment C104, which allows a 10 storey building at Waterfront Place. The appropriate time to finalise new controls is after the applications on the restrictive covenants have been determined. To provide for certainty in the meantime, we submitted that Council should ask the Planning Minister for an interim limit of 3 storeys to protect the status quo. However the Council did not accept our submission and has resolved to continue the process of Amending the Planning Scheme. The C104 amendment has now been forwarded to a Planning Panel. Separately the developer has applied for Council consents to build a 10 storey tower. This was rejected by Council.

## **10. Inner Melbourne Planning Group**

There have been moves for various resident groups in inner city Melbourne to join together so as to be a more effective voice with the State government. We have been attending the early meetings of these groups. One key test will be the new metropolitan planning strategy and the plan for Fishermans Bend.