

## unChain Newsletter

### June Quarter 2014

To comment on this Newsletter, email unChain at [unchaininc@gmail.com](mailto:unchaininc@gmail.com). You can also go to our website for more information, [www.unchain.org.au](http://www.unchain.org.au)

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#### **1. Renewal of Membership of unChain**

Fees for the 2014/2015 year are now due. Financial members will be able to vote at the AGM towards the end of the year. The annual fee is \$20. The easiest way to pay is by direct deposit into the unChain account at the ANZ BSB - 013 427  
A/C - 278146477

Make sure you put your name in the information box so we know which members are renewing is paying. If there are any problems please email the unChain Secretary Richard Roberts at [Richard@superinvestment.com.au](mailto:Richard@superinvestment.com.au)

If you want to join unChain, or have a friend who may be interested, please email our President Catherine Sharples at [unchaininc@gmail.com](mailto:unchaininc@gmail.com)

#### **2. The St Kilda Triangle**

The St Kilda Triangle was the original issue that led to the formation of unChain. In previous newsletters we have informed readers of the steps that the Council is taking for a new development of the Triangle and the lobbying that unChain has been undertaking.

Council has set up five working groups to guide the direction of the St Kilda Triangle. The working groups will cover:

- \* Statutory considerations
- \* Commercial uses and tenants
- \* Programming and activity

- \* Precinct planning, including Jacka Boulevard and the Catani Slopes
- \* Site constraints, including contamination and the Palais Theatre

The working groups will consist of:

- \* a Councillor
- \* up to five community members
- \* a content expert
- \* Council Officer.

Nominations for community members close Friday 8 August. For more information and to nominate,

- Visit [www.stkildatriangle.com](http://www.stkildatriangle.com) or
- email [stkildatriangle@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:stkildatriangle@portphillip.vic.gov.au) or
- contact Peter Sagar on 9209 6327 or
- contact Damian Dewar on 9209 6241.

Council says it would like to see a breadth of different people with a diversity of interests and views on each working group.

The purpose of the groups is to:

- \* review background information and reports
- \* test parameters
- \* propose scenarios
- \* understand alignment on parameters.

Council says it will use an 'enquiry by design process' to work towards an outcome that can be funded and delivered. The outcomes of the working group discussions will be brought together at a Synthesis Workshop.

There were two other important steps in the past 3 months.

In May Council said it is likely that it would call for market interest in the future lease of the Palais Theatre later this year via a publicly advertised Expression of Interest (EOI).

In this quarter Council announced that Mr Peter Sagar has been appointed Director Seaside Precinct. unChain has been asking the Council since 2010 to appoint an experienced senior project manager. Council said that Peter Sagar 'will provide co-ordinated precinct oversight together with leading the St Kilda Triangle project'. Peter Sagar has been with the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure since 2006 and most recently was the Deputy Project Director for Plan Melbourne, Melbourne's new metropolitan planning strategy. Council said that 'he will provide co-ordinated precinct oversight together with leading the St Kilda Triangle project'. The unChain executive is looking forward to meet with him.

### **3. The State Election**

The next Victorian State election is scheduled for 29 November 2014. Albert Park is a marginal seat. Election guru Anthony Green estimates that the margin is only 0.9%.

Labor's Martin Foley is the sitting member and will be opposed by David Collis from the Greens and Shannon Eeles from the Liberals. There will probably be other candidates from the minor parties.

The unChain executive has decided to survey the candidates from the major parties on 'local' issues. Clearly we are hoping that the two major parties will commit to some sensible promises in our marginal seat. The questionnaire includes questions on:

1. Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy
2. Funding for Infrastructure
3. Melbourne Public Transport: the Inner-City Rail Tunnel
4. Public Transport: the 96 Tram Project
5. Neighbourhood Zones and Affordable Housing
6. Schools and pre-schooling
7. The St Kilda Triangle
8. Fishermans Bend
9. Webb Dock
10. Port Phillip Bay
11. The Grand Prix
12. Problem Gambling

In the 2013 federal elections, unChain assessed the candidates answers and then posted an electronic 'how-to-vote' card. This was controversial and will not be repeated this time. Instead the candidates' replies will be posted on our website and we will leave it to each voter to decide who is the best candidate on our 'local' issues. It is also proposed to distribute a 'flyer' listing the questions and directing any potential voter to our website to see what the candidates are saying about the particular issue or issues that concern him or her. unChain remains firmly independent and would like to see local state members elected who have the best interests of our city on their agenda.

Port Phillip is not only within the state seat of Albert Park so unChain will also be surveying the candidates in the parts of the state seats of Brighton, Caulfield and Prahran that are in the municipality of Port Phillip (parts of Elwood, and East St Kilda)

#### **4. Neighbourhood Zones**

The state government's introduction of the biggest changes to planning zones in 30 years enabled Councils to identify the areas that are appropriate for more intensive development and those that are not. The new system has three residential zones: General Residential Zone (GRZ), Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) and Residential Growth Zone (RGZ).

The unChain executive had significant concerns that the zones originally proposed for Port Phillip were too restrictive. In particular we feared that there would be an adverse impact on housing affordability and housing choice by the extensive use of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone. Together with Community Alliance of Port Phillip, unChain made 4 submissions on the Neighbourhood Zones. These submissions are on our website.

In February 2014 Council released a 'Consultation proposal' on the new neighbourhood zones. In May 2014 Council resolved to implement a 2 Stage process.

Stage 1 requested the Minister to approve an amendment to the Planning Scheme that was based on Council's Consultation proposal. There were significant changes to the original proposal that took into account our concerns. In particular there were more generous density limits in the Neighbourhood Residential Zones (NRZ), special provision for social housing and a reduction to 2,500 sq m. for large sites to be zoned RGZ.

Council also resolved that Stage 2 would investigate additional sites and precincts for inclusion in the General Residential Zone (GRZ) and Residential Growth Zone (RGZ). unChain supported the officers' recommendation for an increase in the extent of the GRZ (from the NRZ) and in the extent of the RGZ (from GRZ). At the date of this newsletter, Council has not

Applying the GRZ to a significant amount of the residential land in our municipality would not allow developers 'open slather'. Existing controls (such as heritage overlays, neighbourhood character overlays, design and development overlays, planning overlays) still apply under the GRZ.

The different approaches that have been taken by the other inner city Councils is shown in the table below (note that these figures are indicative only, they are based on early figures in April/May).

% Breakdown of residentially zoned land in inner city Councils

Council	NRZ	GRZ	RGZ
Melbourne*	23	72	.04
Darebin	33	53	
Stonnington	38	58	5
Moreland	66	31	5
Yarra	74	23	4
Moonee Valley	75	25	0.2
Glen Eira	84		

Source: Report to the Future Melbourne (Planning Committee) 3 June 2014 p. 321-332. \*Telephone conversation

It is clear that the 'Melbourne' model (23% NRZ) makes less use of the NRZ than is proposed for Port Phillip under both Stage 1 (80% NRZ) and Stage 2

(70% NRZ). However the impact on housing affordability and housing choice in the two municipalities will be less different than appears on paper.

Councils have the right to vary the minimum height and density controls in their NRZs. Melbourne City Council has not varied the default mandatory two dwellings per lot in its NRZ. In contrast in Port Phillip there is a sliding scale which permits more development than in the NRZs in the City of Melbourne.

#### Density scale for NRZ in Port Phillip

Area	Number of dwellings
0-499 sq m	2 dwellings
450-599 sq m	3 dwellings
600-799 sq m	4 dwellings
800-999 sq m	5 dwellings
1000- 1199 sq m	6 dwellings
1200 sq m +	7 dwellings plus 1 per additional 150 Sq m

Similar areas may be zoned NRZ in Port Phillip but zoned GRZ in Melbourne.. Though liberalised, the density requirements in Port Phillip's NRZ still restrict the capacity to provide new affordable, well-designed accommodation. The Council officers believe that there will not be a dramatic impact on housing affordability, housing choice and good housing design under Stage 2 of its zoning. unChain has submitted that Council should bring forward its review of the Housing Strategy which is due in 2017 to assess the impact of the new zoning.

## 5. Fishermans Bend

unChain has made many submissions on Fishermans Bend (e.g. to the drafts of the new metropolitan planning strategy). In this quarter we sent an email to newsletter subscribers asking them to email the Planning Minister about Fishermans Bend.

In September 2013 Places Victoria released a Draft Vision for the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area. This indicated that the government had learned from the mistakes made at Southbank and Docklands. However now we have a tsunami of applications for high-rise towers (as in the table below). If the Minister (or the new Metropolitan Planning Authority) approves these, the Draft Vision will be destroyed, especially since there will not be the public open space, public transport, schools and other community facilities, that Fishermans Bend needs.

APPROVED APPLICATIONS	Height	Draft Vision
179 Gladstone St	7 storeys	4 storeys
161 Buckhurst St	6 storeys	4 storeys
164 Ingles St	3 storeys	4 storeys

PLANNING APPLICATIONS		
6-78 Buckhurst St	26-37 storeys	18 storeys
15-87 Gladstone St	up to 22 storeys	18 storeys
2-4 Buckhurst St	24/36 storeys	Open Space
228-238 Normanby Rd	39/44 storeys	Tower (no limit)
15-35 Thistlewaite St	38 storeys	4 storeys
134-142 Ferrars St	49 storeys	8 storeys
134 Buckhurst St	30 storeys	8 storeys
166 Buckhurst St	20 storeys	8 storeys
89-103 Gladstone St	30 storeys	18 storeys
123-125 Montague St	28-36 storeys	8 storeys
60-82 Johnson St	28-54 storeys	Tower (no limit)
199-201 Normanby Rd	40 storeys	Tower(no limit)
165-167 Gladstone St	18 storeys	8 storeys

The Metropolitan Planning Authority is responsible for preparing a Strategic Plan for Fishermans Bend. The unChain executive is concerned that the MPA may simply ignore the good work that went into the Draft Vision and allow a developer-driven development of Fishermans Bend's as a dormitory suburb. We expect that the Strategic Plan for Fishermans Bend that has been prepared by the MPA will soon be released.

Council had announced 10 'non-negotiable' priorities:

- Early roll-out of essential community and transport infrastructure such as parks, community facilities, the Collins Street tram extension (Docklands to Plummer Street) and dedicated cycling corridors
- Sensible height restrictions on developments
- Commercial developments to be delivered within walking distance of transport hubs
- Community infrastructure and open spaces to be funded by developer contributions
- The introduction of sustainable urban development goals
- Incentives for affordable housing
- A design review panel to assess applications against the Fishermans Bend Design Guidelines
- Heritage protection on key buildings and laneway character
- Incentives to retain and grow creative industries
- City of Port Phillip designated the Responsible Authority for developments up to 25,000 square metres.

## 6. Rebuilding the Stokehouse

In January the Stokehouse restaurant was destroyed by fire. The Van Haandel Group has a 21 year lease and a replacement restaurant will be

funded from insurance, with Council will contributing no additional rate payer funds.

In June the Council approved the final design of the new Stokehouse. To flood proof the building against future storm surges, the ground floor level will be raised meaning that the building will be nearly 3 metres taller than the previous one. The Minister for Planning is responsible for the final approval.

Councillor Thomann says 'The new building is 2.9 m taller than the previous one - 0.9 m for the new water level requirements, 0.4m for the roof to hide solar panels and other roof stuff and 1.6m for the empty space between the ground floor and the first floor to give more transparency to the building. The building is not as tall as the tallest of the palm trees. All trees will remain on the site. To reduce the height, one option would have been to remove the empty space between the 2 floors but the architect Robert Simeoni advised against this as he felt" the building would have been too bulky." The idea is to be able to see the water through the building because of the empty space. From the Esplanade, people will be able to see a little less sky, but the building will be a lot more attractive."

Robert Simeoni has also been appointed as the architect for the Lifesaving Club next door. The design of the new club will be made available for comments later on this year with plans to build the new building in 2015

## **7. Revitalizing our Shopping Streets**

Council says that it is 'actively working in partnership with local community groups and businesses to implement positive changes and increase the vibrancy of local villages across the municipality'. It has appointed Ms Vanessa Schernickau as the Program Director for the 'Vibrant Villages program'.

For example. significant activities are planned for Fitzroy Street. The state government has awarded the City of Port Phillip \$250,000 for the Fitzroy Street Streetscape Plan project. Council and the Fitzroy Street Traders have engaged Renew Australia to activate the empty shop fronts in Fitzroy Street. But revitalizing streets is more than lighting, seating and plantings.

In Newcastle, there was an arts led recovery of its empty shops a few years ago. See <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bydesign/new-creative-spaces-open-up-in-perth/5587160>

Creative thinking is required for St Kilda streets as empty shopfronts make the streets look like a third world country, hence less people go there which leads to less people going there.

The Linden Arts gallery could sponsor art in the windows of the empty shop fronts. And conversely the arts program could increase awareness and patronage to our potentially amazing art gallery. The City of Port Phillip allocated \$322,000 in the 2014-15 budget to Linden.

Readers who are interested in developing these ideas should contact unChain Vice President, Trevor White at [trevcom@gmail.com](mailto:trevcom@gmail.com).

## **8. The Yarra Trams proposal for Acland St 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. The proposed plans have issues relating to traffic management and flow, impacts on local traders and residential amenity.

Acland Street: Yarra Trams/PTV plan to do the work in the winter of 2015. unChain will actively participate in the detailed consultation process.

Fitzroy St: We have detailed our concerns in previous newsletters. The PTV's proposal for Fitzroy St is to remove the existing stop on Fitzroy St on the beach side of Grey St and construct a new 'super-stop' for the 16 tram between Grey St and Princes St. This will have a significant impact on traffic flows and access to Albert Park and the primary school. unChain do not believe there has been an holistic plan explored for Route 16 changes and the proposed new tram stop. For example there are significant changes needed at the junction and yet there has been no whole of street plan discussed.

Yarra Trams/PTV want to do the work on Fitzroy St in September 2014. However they have to apply for a planning permit and unChain will vigorously oppose this. unChain will also be lobbying the candidates in the state elections to commit to exploring better alternatives for the 16 tram in Fitzroy Street.

## **9. Gasworks Park**

In June the unChain executive attended a Council meeting where the need to remediate the Gasworks Park was discussed. Council has been advised that the site poses a health risk and it must be remediated. Many in the community were passionately opposed to a Draft Plan that involved closing the park for a significant time and removing the mature trees. unChain supported the Council decision to undertake further investigation to determine whether there could be an adequate decontamination that involved less drastic measures.

## **10. St Kilda and South Melbourne Adventure Playgrounds**

The unChain executive regrets the Federal Government announcement that it would cut its contribution to St Kilda Adventure Playground and the South Melbourne Playground. However, the Port Phillip Council has committed to delivering the funding it allocated last year to the two Adventure Playgrounds. This will run out early 2015 and Council is seeking additional funding to try to preserve these programs. A number of locals are also lobbying the state government to contribute to these important social hubs.

## **11. Inner Melbourne Planning Alliance**

unChain is a member of the newly formed Inner Melbourne Planning Alliance. This comprises a range of professional, academics, businesses, residents and community groups from the inner Melbourne Councils of Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Yarra, Port Phillip, Moreland, Stonnington and Maribyrnong. IMPA is committed to facilitating a high level. Balanced and constructive public discussion about improving how planning is managed in our city. Readers interested in learning more or in joining IMPA should go to [www.impa.org.au](http://www.impa.org.au).

On Monday 4 August at Deakin Edge Federation Square from 6 pm to 7.30 pm, IMPA are holding a public forum on the topic 'City in Crisis?' This follows on from the Future Melbourne Network series. The panel is

- Geoffrey London (Victorian Government Architect: Minimum Housing Standards Report)
  - Leanne Hodyl (Melbourne City Council – Draft Housing Strategy)
  - Robert Larocca (RP Data – Victorian Housing Market Specialist)
  - Monique Sasson (Independent Property Analyst)
  - Ashley Williams (Evolve for Property Council)
- Response: Cr Ken Ong, City of Melbourne, Chair of the Planning Committee  
Moderator: Peter Mares

unchain encourages anyone interested to attend.

### **Feedback on the newsletter**

For feedback on this newsletter please email us at [unchaininc@gmail.com](mailto:unchaininc@gmail.com)