

St Kilda Junction development

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Planning in the other place, and it is in relation to the recent discovery that Public Transport Victoria and Yarra Trams are planning to build an industrial power substation in the middle of the St Kilda Road junction. Local residents have recently become aware of this, and they are quite concerned and have raised their concerns with me and with others who have an interest in this, including the City of Port Phillip.

The structure will be the equivalent of three double garages laid end to end, a structure that is nearly 100 square metres in size, and it has been described as not dissimilar to a toilet block in appearance. I have to agree with this somewhat cruel description; certainly the architecture in the plan I have seen has a certain Stalinist look about it. It is going to be in the middle of St Kilda Junction, and it will dominate the grassy treed area there. There has been a pattern recently in St Kilda of quite significant structures like this being built with minimal or no community consultation. I understand that the City of Port Phillip does not support this development, although I may stand corrected on that. In any event, no planning permit is required to build this structure.

What emerged very recently at a public meeting is that discussion has been going on for some two years between Public Transport Victoria and Yarra Trams but not with the public — they have not been involved in any way. Apparently a number of different sites were considered, and this one was chosen. Locals have concerns for safety and loss of amenity, and they believe that the structure will be a big, fat graffiti target — and I am sure they are right on that last point.

Last week Public Transport Victoria called a community consultation at which they announced that this development will proceed, that contracts have been let, that it is now an urgent project and that construction is due to happen in June. Fifty residents — who at this meeting I am told were quite angry about this — were consulted in terms of architectural feedback in relation to the structure that has been proposed. I understand that a further meeting is being called with Public Transport Victoria and VicRoads. There is a history of resident concerns with development and planning issues related to St Kilda Junction, and the action that I am seeking from the minister is an explanation of the current planning framework that affects St Kilda Junction and any plans he may have to change that.



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