

Dear Resident,

It's been a while since our last newsletter and now we have much to pass on, so grab a coffee, put your feet up and read on.

If you don't have time to read all of it, choose the headings you are most interested in and please be sure to respond to the last one. We'd like to get some feedback.

JAAG Steering Committee

2 St Kilda Road – Summary of VCAT Hearing from 04th to 8th June 2012



Proposed 18 storey tower viewed from Fitzroy St., across St. Kilda Rd towards Wellington St.

You will recall that an application for a planning permit to construct an 18 storey tower (see above) was referred to a VCAT hearing, scheduled for the 4th June, 2012.

More than 70 objections had been lodged with Council. JAAG, representing 200 plus members, lodged our objections and announced that we would support Council's decision to oppose the permit at the VCAT hearing.

On your behalf the JAAG Steering Committee formed a "Working Group" to develop a strategy for opposing the Developer's application, which culminated in a written submission from JAAG of 22 pages, plus a further 80 pages of supporting documentation, including aerial photography, maps and a very convincing DVD, illustrating existing traffic congestion caused by vehicles being backed up when attempting to enter the St Kilda Road Junction from Wellington Street.

The VCAT Hearing was originally scheduled for 3 days, plus a fourth day for an onsite inspection, but given the extent of the objections and the complexity of the case overall, the presiding VCAT Member extended the hearing to five days.

In summary, our objections included:

- The proposal does not comply with the Port Phillip Municipal Strategic Statement and in particular to the recently gazetted clause C62 of the Council's Planning Scheme.
- Excessive traffic generation, further adding to the congestion in Wellington Street
- Absence of onsite loading areas.
- Inadequate onsite car parking.
- Excessive bulk, creating unacceptable streetscape impacts in terms of overall scale, particularly when viewed from the east.
- Inadequate integration with the Wellington Street landscape.
- Not in keeping with the primary character of the much lower buildings in St. Kilda Road south of St. Kilda Junction.
- Does not enhance, protect or respect neighbourhood character.
- It represents 18 levels of over development.
- Overshadowing and overlooking of existing dwellings.
- Not enough setback at street level along Wellington Street.
- The building's height is likely to create significant wind tunnel effects at street level.

JAAG's opposition to this Permit application in VCAT represented our biggest challenge to date because if approved, we will all have to live with the result for the rest of our lives! Development costs are estimated to be \$30million, so we were not surprised to be confronted by a team of legal professionals and key "expert" witnesses representing the Applicant.

Port Phillip Council appointed outside legal firm Best Hooper to represent them and our JAAG team was well supported with a "working group" of 10 members, 5 of whom made submissions at the VCAT Hearing as well as the owner of the commercial building at 3 Wellington Street.

Because of the complex discussions on many issues over the course of the Hearing, it's not possible to provide specific details in this newsletter, but we do want to assure you that your interests were well represented by a very professional and committed group of fellow residents and business owners.

Throughout, we were able to raise numerous points of contention resulting in the Applicant amending the original plans for the building. Together with Council's refusal to grant a Permit, we mounted a formidable case to oppose this totally inappropriate high rise development in our precinct.

We expect a decision to be announced by VCAT within 4 to 6 weeks, so let's all keep our fingers crossed for a good outcome. Either way we'll let you know as soon as we do.

35 – 37 Wellington St – VCAT decision

The VCAT decision to refuse a planning permit for an eight storey, high rise, high density residential tower proposed for 35-37 Wellington St, St Kilda took full account of major concerns of the more than 100 objectors, as well as Port Phillip Council's planner who at the mid February VCAT Hearing showed clearly that the proposed building was inappropriate for its surroundings.

Since this VCAT decision resulted in a great victory we thought it might create good vibes to reflect on the press coverage that followed from our media release. Click on the link below for those who are interested:

<http://stkildanews.com/residents-celebrate-after-vcat-refuses-8-storey-residential-tower/#more>

25 – 29 Alma Road

Last September VCAT announced a decision to refuse a planning permit for an 11 storey apartment building, with ground floor offices at 25–29 Alma Road (next to the service station on the corner of St Kilda Road).

For those who objected at VCAT to that planning application, and any other persons who may be impacted by any proposed development of this site, you may want to be aware that a **new Planning Application was lodged at Port Phillip Council on the 17th May, 2012 for construction of a building up to 8 levels comprising 66 dwellings, ground level office space and dispensation of car parking requirements** (provision includes 78 car spaces, eight motor cycle spaces and 75 bicycle spaces in three basement levels). For those who are interested, the plans and application can be viewed at the Council offices, Carlisle Street, St Kilda.

Road Safety improvements along Alma Road, between St Kilda Road & Chapel St.

Many of you will have received a letter from Port Phillip Council recently, announcing road safety improvements to occur in two stages under the above-mentioned heading.

We won't repeat the details here and we don't want to brag, but the reason Council looked into road safety at this location results from a Parking and Traffic Study they undertook last May, as requested by JAAG following a public meeting we held earlier in February 2011. If you were present at this meeting, it's nice to see our collective efforts are making a difference.

This Alma Road safety initiative is one of nine priorities that the Council's Parking and Traffic study recommended and we are hopeful that the remaining eight will follow in due course.

Are you interested in becoming a Councillor of the City of Port Phillip?

If you have read this far, then you are obviously interested in what takes place in the St Kilda Junction Precinct and our Community. If you are also interested in the wider community of Port Phillip, did you know that Port Phillip Council elections will be held on the 27th October, 2012.

JAAG's area, bounded by St. Kilda Road, Nelson/Wellington Streets, Chapel Street and Alma Road, is within the Junction Ward. The Ward runs east down Queens /St. Kilda Roads from Albert Road to Carlisle Street.

The current Ward councillor does not live in the Ward (he lives in Albert Park). In fact at the last election only one of the nine candidates lived here. JAAG believes that its objectives and those of the residents of our area generally, might be much better served if our councillor lived in JAAG's designated precinct, or at least in the Ward.

If you are interested in contesting the election but need more information, Virginia Browne, a co-convenor of JAAG and a former councillor for the area, would be happy to talk to you about the electoral and council processes and answer any queries you may have. Virginia's email address is vlrogers@ozemail.com.au.

Let Us Know You Are Out There!!!!!!

This newsletter is much longer than usual and we try to avoid overloading you with unnecessary information, but it would be very helpful to us to get some feedback from our readers.

So If you have actually read this far, please hit your reply button and answer with a simple "YES, or "NO" to the following question:

"Do you feel safe when walking and crossing the streets in our precinct???"

AND, feel free to let us know of any ways we can improve our communication to you.

AND as always, if you have nearby friends or neighbours who share our concerns for the community we live in, please have them complete and return the attached registration form.

JAAG - Strength in Numbers