



MELBOURNE SOUTH YARRA RESIDENTS GROUP INC.

Established by the residents of South Yarra in 1969

22 May 2014

Mr David Mayes
Manager, Strategic Planning
City Planning & Infrastructure
City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

By email: David.Mayes@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir

Residential Zoning Changes - a golden opportunity lost?

As you will recall you attended our annual general meeting on 20 March and provided us with a brief explanation of the residential rezoning process. As that was the first explanation we had received, our members were not in a position to ask any meaningful questions.

However, we then took steps to become acquainted with the process and following an explanation and questionnaire distributed to all of our members, prepared our submission dated 24 April 2014.

When pieces of information then came to our attention indicating our submission was not receiving support and that little if any of the South Yarra area was likely to be rezoned Neighbourhood Residential I telephoned Councillor Ong's secretary 12 days ago to arrange a meeting with Councillor Ong, yourself and the relevant planners. However, after three telephone calls I was told she had no success as "everyone is very busy". I then rang your office and when you were unavailable left a message requesting that you contact me but heard nothing further until your phone call last Friday 16 May.

That call indicated our concerns were justified, that time was short for any such meeting and the planning department's recommendations might or might not be available beforehand.

The Melbourne South Yarra Residents Group will be extremely concerned if the planners and council do not take this opportunity to protect important areas in South Yarra and the purpose of this letter is to explain our concerns.

1. It is not true to say that the current level of protection whether under the present zoning or heritage regulations is adequate to preserve the history, diversity and character of large parts of South Yarra. Retaining that level of protection by rezoning South Yarra General Residential is not sufficient.

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2. We are concerned that the City of Melbourne appears to be one of the last municipalities to submit its rezoning proposal to the state government and the difficulties and limitations that imposes on all concerned. However, this should not be an excuse for not dealing thoroughly with the issues, including giving ratepayers an adequate opportunity to participate.
3. We are confident that the vast majority of ratepayers living in the streets which we have requested be designated Neighbourhood Residential agree with that additional protection, as do all of our members who live in these areas. If there are ratepayers in those streets who want less protection, and we would be surprised if there were any or many, they have had the opportunity to express their views.
4. We would like the position rectified by the following steps.
 - (a) Providing us with the opportunity to address the planning committee before any decision is made about the planning department's recommendations.
 - (b) Well in advance of the meeting provide us with the planning department's recommendations so that we have time to consider them.

Would you be good enough to advise us when the recommendations have been published and when that planning committee meeting is to take place.

There has been a great deal of discussion between the various resident groups, all of whom seem to have the same concerns as us and all of whom are unhappy with the rushed process and the apparent failure of the planning department and council take advantage of this opportunity to better secure the future of these important areas. While the planning minister may not be happy with the final proposal he and the advisory committee can hardly complain that insufficient provision has been made for residential growth within the City of Melbourne. However, if such a problem does arise it can be dealt with at the time and should not stop council taking a positive stance.

I hope council understand the level of anger within the ratepayers not only of South Yarra but much of this municipality and I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



Michael Butcher
President

Cc Lord Mayor Robert Doyle
Councillor Richard Foster
Councillor Rohan Leppert
Councillor Kevin Louey
Councillor Stephen Mayne
Councillor Cathy Oke
Councillor Ken Ong
Councillor Beverley Pinder-Mortimer
Councillor Jackie Watts
Councillor Arron Wood
Mr Geoff Lawler - Director of City Planning & Infrastructure