

### **Preliminary Background (Refer to Info Kit for full details)**

Notting Hill is one of the smaller suburbs of Melbourne, situated in the City of Monash. It also stands as an exemplar of the implementation failure of M2030, with regard to which Government has to clarify its responsibility and commitment to rectify the issues.

Notting Hill is land-locked within sites designated as activity centres in the M2030. It was built in the 1950's and 1960's by AV Jennings as the first planned suburb in Melbourne. Today, Notting Hill has become a distinct residential area of 700 dwellings, and its residents constitute a supportive community building group that strives to create sustainable liveability in the neighbourhood. Liveability in Notting Hill is a long held privilege that attracted and maintained many people living in the area.

The two local schools were the primary resources providing open space for the community. From 2001 to 2006, 4 amenities were taken away - the child care centre, kindergarten, primary and secondary school.

While M2030 and local city planning is currently based on data that is at least 10 years old, the real demographics of Notting Hill is changing, as evidenced by:

- A recent survey conducted by the Notting Hill Community Association showed many new residents have moved into the area with young and/or school going children; and parenting residents have to drive their younger children in increasingly heavy traffic conditions to schools outside the local area.
- The workforce in the Monash Activity Centre and other surrounding activity centres is growing rapidly, especially with the announcement that Telstra will be reallocated at least 4,000 of its employees into the area in the near future.
- The M2030 push for increasing medium / high density residential redevelopment has already added over 100 dwellings into the area in very recent years.

While these recent changes have resulted in increasing traffic congestion and more pressing need for utility and infrastructure improvements, providing adequate open space for the growing residential and workforce population is being ignored both by State Government and infill developers. The implementation of M2030 in Notting Hill is driven by the priorities for developing activity centres for economic and political benefits. There is no provision either to preserve social and environmental sustainability for the local residents, or to create new support facilities for the increasing population.

The loss of community space and facilities in Notting Hill will undermine the very principles that uphold M2030 in creating long term sustainability for the current and future populations of the suburb. This implementation diversion, if not rectified, will

destroy the future liveability of Notting Hill by allowing State Government to achieve short term economic and political gains which will effectively deny future social and environmental benefits for the people living and working in the area. This risk, if State Government allows it to eventuate, would destroy the future liveability and economic sustainability of Notting Hill, and more widely signal the failure of M2030. Simply put, current M2030 development runs the high risk of turning Notting Hill into an overcrowding and congested slum of the future.

### Summary of the Planning and Development Issues and Conclusion

It is clear that liveability in Notting Hill is secondary to short term speculative development. The disappointing aspect is that the State Government is in no way neutral but a participant and beneficiary of this sale of public amenities. This loss of public space will never be rectified should State Government continues to sell the two closed schools that can provide local amenities and open space for local residents.

### Recommendations

We propose recommendations to stop such situations arising again, and to take remedial action to reverse the damage done:

- That State Government should not alienate public land for development without making provision for adequate open space available to local residents and within easy walking distance from residential housing.
- That before the sale of public land the Government should be required to publish a **Liveability Impact Statement** assessing public use of that land (formal or informal use) and the impact of the loss of access to that land on the surrounding communities.
- That when a public land is rezoned preparatory to sale, State Government should be required to provide:
  - A detailed statement of the reasons for the closure of the amenities,
  - A declaration that it is still surplus to requirements ,
  - A preliminary public justification for closure supported by an transparent assessment of liveability impact at the time when land is first declared surplus to requirements

This is because several years can elapse between declaring a facility and its land surplus to requirements and its rezoning or sale, and during this time the

## Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry – Public Land

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demography or population of the area or the demand for the facility, amenity or service can have changed again.

- That Government departments should reveal their demand management strategies for services provided and the age and extent of date or information the demand management strategy is based upon. The demand management strategy should include a statement of changes in service provision and the effect of this on the liveability of communities serviced, as well as the major milestone actions required.
- That State Government should acknowledge that schools and their associated open spaces are valuable resources for the general community.

### Community Questions

In this context of concern, the Notting Hill Community Association, representing the local residents, has several questions to ask of the State Government concerning their will and resolve to care about and more importantly proactively manage the possible consequences of the risk presented.

The Notting Hill Community Association requests that State Government:

1. Contemplate the recommendations proposed
2. Consider reopening the two schools as public land for providing education, child care and open space for the residential and workforce communities of Notting Hill
3. Consult and collaborate with the Monash City Council, the Notting Hill Community Association and all other local communities to jointly develop a agreed governing framework for ensuring consistent regulation of infill development, and provision of public facilities, with the object of and enhancing, not degrading the current liveability of suburbs in the City of Monash.

Key Question:

1. Will State Government consider these requests and collaborate with a supportive community to make M203O work successfully in Notting Hill and other Monash suburbs?

Other Questions:

2. Is the State Government willing to analyse the social (especially health & safety) and environment (especially liveability, infrastructure and amenities)

## Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry – Public Land

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- impact of selling the two schools for medium/high density infill development, or provide to the public such information if it exists?
3. How much public access land is there in Notting Hill or where is the nearest land with public access and within walking distance for residents and workforces in the area?
  4. The closure of the Monash Primary School and the declaration of the site as surplus to requirements happened much more rapidly than is usual in such cases.
    - 4.1 Can the Education Department be asked whether any prior interest in the site was expressed by parties interested in purchasing the land?
    - 4.2 Will the government administrative procedures for selling school sites be escalated and speeded up if there is a likely buyer?
    - 4.3 What is the average time for school sites between being declared surplus to requirements; rezoned by councils; and sold off as private property?
    - 4.4 What is the timeframe for this happening at the Monash Primary School?
    - 4.5 Will the same fate happen to the Monash Secondary School?
  5. Less than a kilometre away, a new specialised and exclusive state school is in early development in Monash University, with a multi-million budget. If the State Government is anticipating rising future demand for schooling services, can the Government consider the reopening of the closed Notting Hill schools to meet this new forecast? If no, why? If a new specialised secondary school is necessary, why not locate it on the excellent school site already owned by the Education Department?
  6. In the M2030 Annual Community Update – July 2007, there is a statement about “good long-term planning will deliver well-designed neighbourhoods, with green spaces and easy access to community services and transport”. Is this meant to exclude existing and older suburbs like Notting Hill, especially when we have already lost our schools and about to have their lands rezone for development rather than be retained for community uses, including open space?
  7. Given that the implementation of M2030 in Notting Hill will increase the residential and workforce population, does State Government agree that the creation of new and/or retention of existing public land for open space and other community multi-uses is more essential for achieving social and environment sustainability goals than just focusing at achieving short term economic gain and increasing surplus public cash? If no, why?
  8. Has State Government analysed the correlation between lacking open space and obesity (especially in children)? If no, why. If yes, what preventive

## Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry – Public Land

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actions can be considered as Notting Hill progresses to losing its open space for recreation and health through the sale of the two schools?

9. Should the State Government consider having a public debate or asking for more inclusive public / community submissions regarding how Australians would like to live in the future (instead of making assumptions which have already created public uproars)? If no, why?
  
10. Is it reasonable to ask for detailed M2030 implementation plans by suburb to enable taxpayers appreciate the decision criteria, activity timelines, management and community involvement frameworks and milestones of local M2030 implementation in their suburbs? If no, why?

## Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry – Public Land

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11. Does State Government seriously believe medium/high density infill developments would make future housing more liveable and affordable in Notting Hill where the area already:

- 11.1 Increasingly lacks community amenities (especially open space),
- 11.2 Lacks public transport choices and proximity to train and tram systems
- 11.3 Faces increasing traffic congestion that is unlikely to reduce greatly when there is continuous residential and workforce<sup>1</sup> population growth?

If yes, may we request a simple but clear and precise layman's explanation of how these concerns will be managed in the implementation of M2030?

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<sup>1</sup> For example Telstra anticipates to reallocate ~6,000+ of its staff when it completes redeveloping its Notting Hill facilities in the near future.