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27 September 2007

Submission for the Select Committee on Public Land Development

The sale of public land for private development is an issue which has come to affect me personally in recent times. I have been a resident of the City of Banyule side of Apollo Parkways, Greensborough for nine years and in the last few weeks I have become aware that Nillumbik council is proposing to subdivide and sell off ALL the land surrounding their current civic offices on their side of Apollo Parkways. (This area is zoned for Public Use.) Through the process of attending council meetings and talking to other members of the community it appears that Nillumbik council's approach to the sale and development of this public land is an exercise in **how not** to sell/develop public land. I have outlined some points below.

1. If councils propose the sale and/or development of public land then the wider community, that is all groups who utilise or gain amenity from the land, should be consulted.

Nillumbik shire has been somewhat selective in their consultation process as they used Plenty River Drive as the boundary for informing members of the Apollo Parkways community, thus omitting approximately 40% of the local community. Many residents, including me, have only become aware of the council's intentions through the local newspapers or by word of mouth.

2. The intention to sell and/or develop public land should be made clear to the local community.

In the case of the shire of Nillumbik, the intention to sell/develop the public land surrounding their civic offices has been somewhat overshadowed in their 'Our Civic Future – Discussion paper' by the discussion regarding the need to upgrade the civic offices. The discussion paper's response form did NOT include an option not to sell the public land.

3. Community usage of public land should be investigated thoroughly before any sale or development is considered.

In the case of Apollo Parkways, Nillumbik shire claim that the area to be developed is un-utilised vacant land. I personally walk across some part of this land EVERY day of the week and I see other people walking, playing soccer, walking their dogs etc. on a regular basis. Apollo Parkways Primary School has also been using the amphitheatre section of this land for outdoor activities as their school oval is bare earth due to the drought. Nillumbik shire's own figures (see back page of their 2007-2008 Budget kit) show that between 1 July 2006 and 1 May 2007 there were 729,724 visits to the Diamond Valley Sports and Fitness Centre and 136,672 visits to the Diamond Valley Library which are both adjacent to the land in question. In total this amounts to 866,396 visits to the area in 10 months. If only 5% of the visits also involved utilizing the surrounding open land then that would be 43,320 visits which is a significant usage of the area.

4. Any proposal to develop public land should take into account the neighbourhood character of the area and fall within Melbourne 2030 guidelines.

Melbourne 2030 states that local government should "locate higher-density development on sites that are well located in relation to activity centres and public transport." Nillumbik council have on more than one occasion mentioned their preference to have the proposed development consist of a mixture of high and medium density housing. Yet, in their 'Our Civic Future – Discussion Paper', they state that this area is "not conveniently accessible by public transport". This is obviously in conflict with Melbourne 2030 and the state government needs to ensure that councils do not disregard it.

This mixture of high and medium density housing also clashes with Apollo Parkways' neighbourhood character as the area consists predominantly of single dwellings on individual blocks of land with trees dominating the landscape.

In addition, the Shire of Nillumbik calls itself the 'Green Wedge Shire'. I find it hypocritical of a 'Green Wedge' shire to propose high density development of public open space in an already built up area.

5. The sale or development of public land should not be used to prop up cash strapped municipalities. If councils have to resort to selling public assets to maintain their services then perhaps they are not viable as municipalities in the first place.

Yours sincerely

Dr Melissa McCulloch