



"Ross Hetherington"

10/02/2009 07:52 PM

To <veac@dse.vic.gov.au>

cc

bcc

Sub:

①

2

No: 54

Subject Edgars Creek Parkland

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ross Hetherington. I've been a resident of Coburg North since October 10, 2004. We bought our house at _____ Coburg North because we loved the feel of the community, the parkland at the end of Ronald Street so readily available and for the park directly across from our house at the time.

Since then, I have watched the development at Pentridge become more and more of an eyesore and additionally witnessed the closure of the Kodak factory with its subsequent year and a half of remediation works across the road from my house. Furthermore, the park area across from our house was in fact Kodak land and has now been fenced off from the local community that used to enjoy annual Boxing Day Cricket matches and friendly games of kick to kick over the winter months. Simultaneously, I have watched the people in my community put in place the Sustainability Street initiative (whereby residents replace tired nature strips with native plants) and also implement the reopening of the Coburg Olympic Pool, which is widely being enjoyed. I am very proud of our community and plan to be as active as I can in its continual development and improvement of the area, both for myself and future generations.

I'm appalled at the proposed sale of the 10 ha of parkland in North Coburg. This green area is of tremendous benefit to the existing community and attracts others from Moreland and surrounding areas to enjoy its environmental, ecological and recreational offerings. At present, it's still the largest piece of passive open space in the district of Moreland, and with the recent developments of nearby Pentridge Village, central Coburg and the awaiting Kodak development, there will be even more pressure on the area by an estimated additional 9,000 residents.

I am an original member of the Friends of Edgars Creek, and have spent many hours of my free time (as have several other members of the nearby community) to help maintain the creek and parkland and help to plant over 6,000 plants for the general beautification of the creek area. As a member of FOEC, I have also been able to meet over 70 like-minded members of the community who similarly value and respect this piece of land. Many people I have met and had discussions with enjoy the area for different reasons – some to walk their dogs in an off-leash environment, where the dogs are able to play and interact with other dogs; some to involve their children in environmentally improving a previously often neglected tribute of Merri Creek and generally get their hands dirty; some who enjoy the flora and fauna in the area; some who enjoy the bike ride through the green space (whether for leisure or on their way to work instead of driving); some who like to be able to hit some golf balls on the driving range and others just for the peaceful escape from the bustle of inner city life.

I am also a tree custodian in the Riparian Tree Custodian initiative from FOEC and would treasure the opportunity to see my Redgum grow over the next decades without having to cope with the pressures of additional building and residents in the area instead of green space. We see the park as a gift to be enjoyed and appreciated. To have a gift be taken and sold for private development would be a shame and a great loss to the local community.

I understand that Vic Roads once acquired the land with the intention of building a freeway into the city along Merri Creek. That idea was defunct. However local rate payers and people's registration fees to Vic Roads over the years have helped pay for the land many times over. Why try and sell something that already rightfully belongs to the surrounding community? On top of that local ratepayers have been asked to pay \$9.5 million for the land to stop it from being sold off to developers. For residents to pay more for something that is already owned and used so often and by so many seems absurd.

Additionally, I understand that the land is subject to inundation from flooding and storm-water run-off and I question the value to developers for such land.

In the next few years, our little pocket of Coburg North will have a lot of issues to address – traffic congestion, public transport, garbage vehicle access, 9,000 new residents, youth boredom, lack of facilities, headlight flooding . . . the list is very long.

I would view the sale of this land as detrimental to the community and the long term development of the community and urge the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council and the Victorian Government to consider this proposed sale with serious contemplation to the detrimental effects that it would have on the environment, the ecology, the recreational facilities and the community.

Yours sincerely
Ross Hetherington
