

Fair-go for Footscray Rail Residents

Bulletin : 24th August 2010

- ▶ Meeting cancelled - **no** meeting this Wednesday (25th Aug)
- ▶ Next meeting - (Wed 1st Sep)
- ▶ Group Submissions Are In!
- ▶ Our case taken on by PILCH
- ▶ Ombudsman
- ▶ 'Settled Variations' – confusing comment by the Premier

▶ **Meeting cancelled (Wed 25th Aug)**

There was a lot of enthusiasm at the last meeting for the idea of inviting a professional valuer for a general Q&A session for next Wednesday's meeting. Unfortunately, we couldn't arrange this in time so we decided to cancel this week's scheduled meeting (Wed 25th August). We are still trying to organise the valuer for our next meeting (see below). The Q&A session with valuers will be particularly for those who are going to be acquired but there will be updates and other issues discussed too and everyone is welcome as usual!

▶ **Next meeting on Wed 1st Sep**

Despite the cold last Wednesday, about 20 neighbours came along to the FFRR meeting. There was strong support for the idea of continuing with regular meetings, but the meeting decided to move to fortnightly meetings instead of weekly. Events have slowed (thankfully!) after the initial flurry of activity and a meeting every two weeks should be enough. Don't forget to pencil in these dates on your diary:

Wed - 1 st Sep	Wed - 13 th Oct	Wed - 10 th Nov	Wed - 8 th Dec
Wed - 15 th Sep	Wed - 27 th Oct	Wed - 24 th Nov	Wed - 22 nd Dec
Wed - 29 th Sep			

The usual time of **7:00pm** at the usual venue, the Senior Citizens Centre, 130 Buckley St.

▶ **Group Submissions Are In!**

We lodged a bundle of group (and individual) submissions before the deadline last week. These are just some of the group submissions lodged. Various 'cluster' group submissions and loads of individual submissions were sent before close of submissions:

- 'Concerns about being forced to leave Footscray' – 31 Signatories
- 'Request for Support for Long Term Residents' – Total of 41 Signatories
- 'Concerns about Increased Levels of Noise and Vibration' – Total of 43 Signatories
- 'Request for Social Impact Assessment' – Total of 45 Signatories
- 'Failure to Adequately Consult and Inform' – Total of 46 Signatories
- Large format mural submission with contributions from Rhiannon, Kim, Craig, Mai and Noriko, (this may appear in next week's edition of 'The Mail').
- Railway Place residents also produced a very comprehensive submission.

We would like to thank Ben, Carita, Keelia from Slater and Gordon for providing an excellent submission template and working on the night to help a number of people complete their submissions. Thanks too to Andrew from Aitken Partners, for his advice and assistance on the night.

Below are their contacts for your reference:

- Ben Hardwick - 9602 6813 / bhardwick@slatergordon.com.au
- Carita Kazakoff - 9602 8617 / carita.kazakoff@slatergordon.com.au
- Andrew Blogg - 8600 6036 / ablogg@aitken.com.au

► ***Our case is approved by the PILCH***

PILCH, the Public Interest Law Clearing House is a not-for-profit organisation providing free legal advice on cases of public interest. We lodged an application with PILCH for advice on whether the Government and DoT have followed correct process. Colleen Hartland, our local MP, also lodged an application and we learned last week that PILCH has accepted the case.

It is important to note that this advice does not cover our individual cases. They will be looking at the legality of the overall process. We are not seeking to oppose the RRL project, we just want to be sure that our rights have not been trampled.

► ***Ombudsman***

Jocelyn, from Albert St, has lodged a complaint with the Ombudsman. She has expressed our concerns as:

- Due process has not been followed by the Regional Rail Link (RRL) project group or Transport Department.
- Despite verbal and written requests for alternative plans and feasibility reports regarding this project, none have been provided.
- There has been an overall failure to communicate with the local community

The Ombudsman's office has shown some interest in the case and contact continues.

► ***'Settled Variations' – confusing comment by the Premier (again!)***

The Premier said on 19th Aug that *"the route is pretty well settled"*, but the Department of Transport (DoT) has been telling us that the final alignment won't be determined until the various assessments are completed and the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) referral is signed off by the Planning minister. Which is correct?

"Well we are basically trying to work with the residents to give them as much help and support as possible. But we need to move the project forward. There has been as you know a great deal of consultation between the department and the minister and with residents. We are trying to move the project forward, and at the same time give residents the sort of certainty and support that they need. When you are talking about the exact route you are talking about minor variations."

The help and support residents most want is accurate and timely information, and some real consultation. We are left wondering why we were not presented with alignment options and other crucial engineering information long before July 12. Why weren't preliminary engineering assessments done beforehand and made public to inform consultation, as was done for RRL stage-2?

DoT has provided no rationale for its recommendation of the current preferred alignment (the one Brumby now says is "pretty well settled") and it is hard to have confidence in the engineering decisions when 'variations' are still occurring that mean the difference between a house being demolished or saved. Was this route ever properly planned, or is this engineering by-the-seat-of-the-pants?

Stay tuned for further bulletins. Support your neighbours and community by sharing information via these bulletins, the group email list and web site www.ffrr.footscray.org

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