

Anger grows over towers plan

BY GOYA BENNETT

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GLOBAL oil and military giants, four state government authorities and prominent political figures are among those who have condemned the Williamstown towers proposal, with 142 submissions pouring in.

An analysis by lobby group Save Williamstown showed that of the 142 submissions, less than a handful support the Nelson Place Village proposal for the former Port Phillip Woollen Mill site.

New plans show four residential towers, the tallest of which has increased in height to

47metres - up there with the iconic Timeball Tower.

The amended proposal also includes two-to-three-storey townhouses in existing streets and four new streets within the site bounded by Nelson Place, Ann and Kanowna streets; four towers from seven to 13 storeys; and 451 new homes.

The submissions, representing 220 groups or individuals, will be considered by an advisory committee appointed by Planning Minister Justin Madden, who controversially rezoned the site for residential development in March.

Former premier Joan Kirner, together with Williamstown MP Wade Noonan and former Victorian Government associate architect Shelley Penn, made a joint 183-page submission condemning the proposal.

Mr Noonan, who visited Sydney's Garden Island to examine the impact of residential development on shipyard operations, said the towers had evoked a bigger and more hostile response than any electorate-based issue since he was elected in 2007.

Ms Penn said the height was really inappropriate for Williamstown.

"There are alternative ways - you don't have to build towers to support density increases."

Developer spokesman Ashley Williams, managing director of Evolve Development, said the proposed height of the tallest tower - which could accommodate 16 storeys - had increased to 47metres despite the wave of community protest.

"The proposed heights have been rounded up where applicable to reflect current planning practice," he said. Port of Melbourne, the Environment Protection Authority, WorkSafe, Department of Transport (Freight Logistics Marine), Mobil and BAE Systems made submissions against the development.

Save Williamstown and others are calling on the advisory committee to rezone the land to mixed use, noting the 300-metre buffer zone required by Mobil and 100-metre buffer from the naval shipyard would render two-thirds of the site unsafe or unsuitable for living.

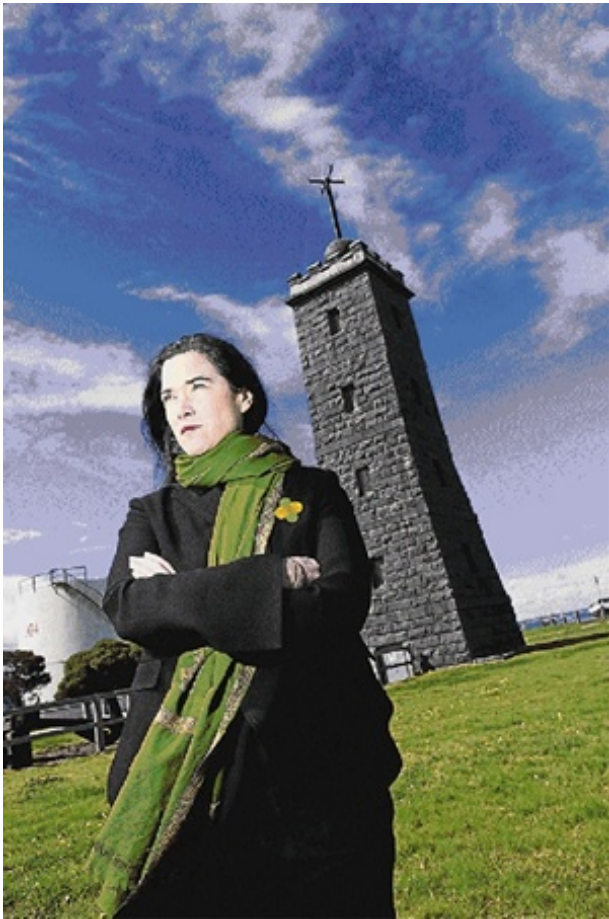
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Height of anger: Shelley Penn believes there is no need for towers in Williamstown that would rival the height of the Timeball Tower (background). Picture: Marco De Luca

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