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[Objecting to Plans](#)   [2012 Planning Scheme Amendment](#)   [2010 SW Presentation](#)

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Micro living in the big city is not for everyone

Monday, 19 August 2013

The Age  
by MARIKA DOBBIN - 19/08/13, 3:00 AM

“...They are tiny apartments about the size of a standard car parking space. Studio flats for sale in central Melbourne and Footscray are as small as 15 square metres.

"Micro-apartments" are a trend in the world's Western cities but not everyone is in favour of them.

Most are less than 18.5 square metres, including separate bathrooms. They typically come furnished, sometimes with built-in beds and other amenities. Few come with parking.

A host of them for sale in Melbourne cost \$115,000 to \$165,000. All have a single small window and a kitchenette the size of a broom cupboard. The smallest was 11.2 square metres plus a closet bathroom, built several years ago at 268 Flinders Street, in the city. Agent Barry Plant pulled it off the market on Friday saying it was "unsellable" for the reserve of \$160,000. Banks would not lend for it despite a new tenant just having moved in, an agent said....”

<http://m.theage.com.au/business/property/micro-living-in-the-big-city-is-not-for-everyone-20130818-2s51z.html?skin=iphone>

### SW Comment

Will the Former Port Phillip Woollen Mill Development have some of those and even better they will have to close their one window onto Nelson Place to avoid being woken by noise from the shipyards and the fuel pumps at the MHF. That's 21st century quality living. The government must set minimum standard and do that soon.

< previous

next >



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[Objecting to Plans](#)   [2012 Planning Scheme Amendment](#)   [2010 SW Presentation](#)

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## Planning for the worst -Matthew Guy in the firing line

Sunday, 25 August 2013

Brisbane Times  
Bruce Guthrie

“...Matthew Guy has big plans - for the city, the state and, perhaps most of all, himself. And he's wasted no time putting many of them in place. As Planning Minister - with ambitions to be premier - he's reshaping the CBD and has signed off on many new developments, even a new suburb or two. He's a man in a hurry.

Which makes his botched rezoning of a 24-hectare Phillip Island farmlet disturbing on many levels. It wasn't so much a plan that came unstuck, as one that was unhinged from the very beginning.

Two years after his embarrassing flip-flop over the property at Ventnor, Victorian taxpayers last week funded confidential, multimillion-dollar payouts to a local landowner and a developer to make the mess go away.

Trouble is, we don't know how many millions it cost to buy silence. And that's a disgrace. If there were valid reasons to keep the details private, I might begrudgingly accept the secrecy surrounding the settlement. But this was a political decision, pure and simple, to save the reputations of Guy and a bunch of blueblood liberals in the run-up to an election.

As The Age's Royce Millar noted when he broke the story last week: "The deal prevents a courtroom grilling for some of the party's most senior figures, including federal frontbenchers Greg Hunt and Andrew Robb, and former premier Ted Baillieu, on their knowledge of one of the murkiest planning affairs in Victoria's recent history.

Most of all, though, it spared Guy, who rezoned the land against the original advice of his department and its lawyers, the local Bass Coast shire, and two independent planning panels after lobbying by local Liberals and a kitchen-table chat with the owner of the property who stood to make millions if it was rezoned residential.

While Guy denies having anything other than a brief discussion with the owner, the farmland was rezoned soon after. It was a breathtakingly stupid move that could have led to hundreds of units being built in an area with little infrastructure.

All this from a man who's made no secret of his desire to reshape planning across the state. How many other decisions will come back to haunt us in other ways?

Not surprisingly, there was an outcry at Ventnor. So much so that just a fortnight after the rezoning decision, Guy overturned it, reportedly because of pressure from then premier Ted Baillieu and local federal MP Hunt, who publicly took credit for convincing Guy to rethink.

If the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) had retrospective powers, I have no doubt there would have been a push to refer the Ventnor affair. In the absence of such powers, there have been calls for a public inquiry...”

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/comment/planning-for-the-worst-20130824-2sim9.html>

### SW Comment

We're certainly not able to have a chat over the kitchen table with Mr Guy about the stupidity of the Woollen Mills decision which involves safety not cows, but it seems some party faithful in Ventnor have better access.

[< previous](#)

[next >](#)



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[Objecting to Plans](#)   [2012 Planning Scheme Amendment](#)   [2010 SW Presentation](#)

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### Port of Melbourne 'at risk of fire' Wade Noonan asks questions in Parliament

Wednesday, 28 August 2013

HOBSONS BAY WEEKLY  
By BENJAMIN MILLAR  
Aug. 28, 2013, 12:53 p.m.

Residents and businesses are being put at risk due to inadequate firefighting capabilities at the port of Melbourne, according to an experienced mariner.

Captain William Korevaar, who has 30 years' experience in the industry, including 20 as master on firefighting and emergency support vessels, has written to Police and Emergency Services Minister Kim Wells and WorkSafe warning of his concerns.

Williamstown MP Wade Noonan has told Parliament he has met Captain Korevaar to discuss the risks associated with shipping tankers berthing at Mobil's major hazard facility at Point Gellibrand.

"Captain Korevaar's very clear concern is that if there were to be a major fire incident involving dangerous goods in the port, such as on a tanker in the river, at Point Gellibrand, Holden Dock or Coode Island, there would simply be inadequate capacity to control those fires if shore-side resources could not gain access, failed or were inadequate."

In his letter to WorkSafe, Captain Korevaar stated that none of the four main tug boats in the port of Melbourne complied with Australian standards.

"Of even greater concern is that the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) cancelled an agreement with towage providers for firefighting support in June, 2013," Mr Noonan said.

He said the lack of binding arrangements between the port of Melbourne and the MFB defied recognised industry standards.

Port of Melbourne Corporation head of corporate affairs, Peter Harry, said the MFB was a fire-fighting agency, unlike the PoMC.

"While we work closely with MFB on joint exercises etc, the MFB are better placed than ourselves to determine what firefighting resources might be necessary."

Mr Noonan told the Weekly the revelations raised "very serious concerns" about the risks associated with Williamstown's Port Phillip Woollen Mill redevelopment, where up to 800 new high-rise apartments and 2000 new residents would be "just a few hundred metres from where 100,000-tonne tankers transfer their hazardous cargo through Mobil's tanks and pipelines".

"These concerns have been raised separately with the Minister for Planning on numerous occasions but, given his cavalier attitude, he refuses to engage in this issue."

He cited "a near disaster" at the Point Gellibrand facility in 2009 when a cargo arm broke away from a ship in bad weather and spilled crude oil directly into the bay..."

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/story/1736674/port-of-melbourne-at-risk-of-fire/?src=rss>

### SW Comment

Let's hope that if there were ever an explosion or fire at the tanks or the ships the prevailing wind wasn't from the south east or all fire fighting capability would be lost and Williamstown would be engulfed in noxious fumes.

< previous

next >

