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Port of Hastings plan 'financial disaster' - seems like Andrew Elsbury MLC might have it wrong...

Monday, 6 May 2013

<http://m.theage.com.au/victoria/port-of-hastings-plan-financial-disaster-20130505-2j1fc.html>

The Age

by JOSH GORDON - 06/05/13, 3:00 AM

“The Napthine government's plan to spend up to \$12billion developing the Port of Hastings would be a "financial disaster" for the freight industry, one of the nation's leading logistics experts has warned. Former Toll boss Paul Little, who resigned from the company in late

2011 but remains the largest private shareholder and a consultant, has thrown his weight behind a proposal for another port development located on the other side of the bay near Geelong.

In a speech delivered last week, Mr Little, who according to Forbes is the nation's 37th-richest person with an estimated net worth of \$780 million, said the proposal to develop Hastings was deeply flawed. Mr Little, who spent 25 years as chief executive of Toll Holdings and is expected to return this year as a non-executive director, said the Hastings option would "not deliver the best outcome for Victoria". "Trying to relocate port-based logistics services close to Hastings would be a financial disaster for the logistics industry, if [it was] unable to pass on higher operating costs," he said...

...Labor's ports spokeswoman, Natalie Hutchins, accused the government of ignoring important advice from leading industry figures, saying Labor supported developing a port in the west.

Ports Minister David Hodgett said the Bay West option remained a "thought bubble".

"Whilst it might be geographically closer it's still going to have exactly the same issues in terms of freight and logistics," he said. "It would put a massive amount of trucks onto Geelong Road and across the West Gate Bridge, an already stressed traffic route."....."

SW COMMENT:

Andrew Elsbury MLC doesn't believe there is any issue with the Mobil Pt Gellibrand MHF in the long run because the port is moving to Westernport.. Seems like Mr Elsbury hasn't done his homework. Looks like Mobil is here for the foreseeable future and the government must take note of the safety issues.

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Developers offer top-end freebies

Monday, 6 May 2013

The Age
by MARIKA DOBBIN - 06/05/13, 3:00 AM

<http://m.theage.com.au/business/property/developers-offer-top-end-freebies-20130505-2j1cx.html>

“Melbourne apartment developers are resorting to giveaways of free marina berths, \$40,000 furniture packages and stamp duty rebates of up to \$45,000 to attract off-the-plan buyers in an increasingly flooded market.

There were 23,325 new apartments granted planning approval in the

12 months to February, driven in part by interventions by Planning Minister Matthew Guy to approve a host of new skyscrapers. It represented a 19 per cent jump in approvals from the year before, when 19,530 apartments were given the green light, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. That compares with just 11,258 five years ago under the previous government and during the credit crunch.....”

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Figure 3 The Oriental Hotel, 1904. Source: 'Williamstown Illustrated'.

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History pared back to tower facades

Sunday, 12 May 2013

The Age
12th May 2013

<http://www.theage.com.au/business/property/history-pared-back-to-tower-facades-20130512-2jg89.html>

“Facadism - a trend of using only the frontage of his- torical buildings in new developments - is making a return to Melbourne's CBD.

Three recent proposals would see some of Mel- bourne's historic buildings demolished (except for the brick facades) to make way for skyscrapers.

Critics of the trend that was popular in the 1990s say facadism is "fake heritage", "anti-cultural" and creates an "ugly, pop-up book version" of Melbourne's history.

Melbourne City Council last week endorsed plans for a 32-storey tower for Victoria University on Lit- tle Lonsdale Street behind the Royal Mint.

The project would demolish all but the front portion of the Women's Venereal Disease Clinic built in 1919.

The council's endorsement seemingly goes against its own planning policy that "older buildings should be retained in their three dimensional form, not as two dimensional facades".

Cr Stephen Mayne, who sits on the planning committee, said facadism was not ideal and the council was moving to heritage-list more buildings. "It's a nod to heritage but not full-blown her- itage, so it is an architectural compromise that is sometimes difficult to avoid," Cr Mayne said.”

SW COMMENT:

The facade of the Oriental Hotel should be retained even renaming with its original name of Cox Family Hotel as it was an important land mark for those landing in Williamstown in the early Goldrush years before Station Pier was opened.

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Pipe bomb charge over Texas explosion

Monday, 13 May 2013

<http://www.theage.com.au/world/pipe-bomb-charge-over-texas-explosion-20130511-2jel1.html>

The Age
11 May 2013

“Texas authorities have opened a criminal investigation into last month's deadly explosion at a fertiliser plant that killed 14 people and injured about 200 others. The announcement came hours after a paramedic who responded to the explosion was arrested on a charge of possessing the

components of a pipe bomb. Law enforcement officials would not say whether the charge was related to the blast.

Steven McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said he had told the Texas Rangers to work with the McLennan County sheriff's office on the inquiry, which came more than three weeks after the explosion at the West Fertiliser Company plant outside West, Texas, about 30 kilometres north of Waco.

"This disaster has severely impacted the community of West and we want to ensure that no stone goes unturned and that all the facts related to this incident are uncovered," Mr McCraw said....."

SW COMMENT:

Vulnerable communities when MHF are too close to housing and terrorist groups and deranged individuals are able to trigger explosive events

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Developer slams delays in Hobsons Bay

Monday, 13 May 2013

Herald Sun

24 Apr 2013

John Masanauskas city reporter

<http://www.newspaperdirect.com>

“A DEVELOPER has bitterly attacked local councillors for opposing major housing projects.

Evolve Development director Ashley Williams has accused councillors of bowing to pressure for political survival.

“Even when reports are put in front of them that are supported by their

own planning staff they elect not to support the planning officers but vote in accordance with the loud voice of objection,” he said.

Hobsons Bay Council is fighting Evolve’s bid to build up to 800 apartments and townhouses for its \$200 million Nelson Place Village development at Williamstown.

The eight-year battle, to go before VCAT in June, is believed to be the state’s longest planning dispute....

.....Mr Williams is concerned that Hobsons Bay is blocking Evolve’s attempts to demolish the 140-year-old Oriental Hotel, which he says is unsafe and should be replaced with apartments.

“Ultimately, it’s just a big handball to VCAT and the cost goes up and the time delays go up,” he said.

Hobsons Bay mayor Angela Altair said: “The council always strives to make decisions that are in the best interests of the Hobsons Bay community””

SW COMMENT:

A bit of honesty about how old this hotel is would help.. It was built in 1854 and is the oldest hotel in Williamstown and possibly the oldest brick 3 storey hotel in the whole state of Victoria.

Added to the fact it is very wrong for the developer to be exposing future residents to the dangers of living too close to a Major Hazard Facility. The Port Phillip Woollen Mill Advisory Committee said Mixed Use was more appropriate for the site and to pursue residential development encroaching on dangerous port facilities is a very valid reason to tell the developer to go away and think again. Councillors are obliged to think of their community.

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River crossing on the Never-Never, LeadWest claims

Thursday, 16 May 2013

Hobsons Bay Weekly

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/story/1500968/river-crossing-on-the-never-never-leadwest-claims/?src=rss>

“MOTORISTS in the west could be waiting up to a decade before a second river crossing is built, according to regional lobby group LeadWest.

The state government last week announced it would spend \$294 million over two years to begin building the eastern

section of the east-west link. The decision disappointed LeadWest and western suburbs councils which had been lobbying for the western end to be built first.

LeadWest chief executive Anton Mayer said prioritising the eastern section of the 18-kilometre road project meant the west would be waiting until at least 2020 for a second river crossing. "The community will have to live with the impact of extra truck movements in the west unless other projects are introduced"...

.....Western Metropolitan Liberal MP Andrew Elsbury defended the decision to fund the eastern section first, saying it would benefit the west by diverting traffic from the M1 corridor."

SW COMMENT:

And the government expects half a West East Freeway to be effective - starting at Citylink and forcing more traffic from the West (like most of the industrial traffic because the west is where most industry is!) onto the Westgate Bridge & Bolte Bridge route before it can access the East West Freeway.

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Point Gellibrand: Industry against housing push around major hazard facilities

Sunday, 19 May 2013

Hobsons Bay Weekly

By GOYA DMYTRYSHCHAK April 30, 2013, 4:53 p.m.

<http://www.maribyrnongweekly.com.au/story/1468205/point-gellibrand-mobil-backs-housing-push-around-major-hazard-facilities/?cs=1468>

“MOBIL has called on the state government to give "more serious consideration" to residential development near major hazard facilities (MHFs) like its Point Gellibrand tank farm.

The call came as Hobsons Bay Council representatives met Planning Minister Matthew Guy to discuss "how consistency, community safety

and future development proposals can be balanced with the needs of industry".

Mayor Angela Altair labelled the meeting "productive". "The council is seeking clearer measures, including a review of planning processes and of state risk and safety management processes for MHFs."

She said Mr Guy indicated he would discuss the issue with Police and Emergency Services Minister Kim Wells.

As reported by the Weekly, in February the council asked the government and MHF operators to "urgently" assess risks at eight sites in Hobsons Bay. Mobil spokeswoman Melanie Saliba said the oil giant supported the council's call. "We support it in raising this issue with the government and look forward to state and local governments giving more serious consideration to the needs of industry and community well-being with regard to local planning and development matters in the future."....

...Williamstown state MP Wade Noonan said "recent global events should remind the state government how important it was to adopt a cautious approach to approving high-density residential developments within close proximity to major hazard facilities"..."

SW COMMENT:

At last the Government is holding some relevant talks on this issue. It should never have got to this stage. It should have been knocked back in 2009 when the Industrial Land Management Strategy was adopted and their Panel report said that Port of Melbourne, Mobil's landlord, said "residential development is inappropriate". How the Minister for Planning got a Ministerial briefing signed by David Hodge saying that:

"13. There is considerable strategic planning policy support to pursue a rezoning and redevelopment of the site for residential purposes." beggars belief.. Surely someone in the DPCD actually read the panel report.

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Shipbuilding jobs under threat

Sunday, 19 May 2013

The Age

<http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/shipbuilding-jobs-under-threat-20130517-2jpxq.html>

“One of Australia’s biggest unions fears up to 1100 workers at a Williamstown shipyard could lose their jobs and has raised concerns about the future of the country’s naval ship building industry . Australian Manufacturing Workers Union national secretary Paul Bastion said he was deeply concerned about looming job losses at Williamstown naval shipyard, which is owned by BAE systems.

“We are very concerned and it is not restricted to Williamstown,” he said.

Mr Bastion said contracts earmarked in the Gillard government’s defence white paper needed to be brought forward to preserve jobs and skills in the industry.

A spokeswoman from BAE said the shipyard was facing “the very real prospect of a ‘five-year valley of death’.”

There will be an absence of naval shipbuilding work in Williamstown from 2015 until at least 2020. The job losses are expected to occur by 2015....”

SW COMMENT:

The Budget might have brought some relief but we have to remember that BAE Systems owns the land of the shipyards and in the last few years has sold several parcels of land IN the Former Port Phillip Woollen Mill Site to Evolve. Therefore they have not been vigorously against the development. With Garden Is in Sydney the arrival of apartments and housing too close meant that nighttime work had to stop and the former major shipyards became a repair location with strict hours of operation. It is only the MHF at Pt Gellibrand which prevents this scenario in Williamstown where a fast buck on housing development is seen as preferable to a shipbuilding industry which has international and military work and was the birthplace of the Australian Navy.

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Developer can't alter heritage windows & only 4 people allowed at Marketing Suite at Britannia

Sunday, 19 May 2013

Published on the Victorian Legal Database

Nelson Place Village Pty Ltd v Hobsons Bay CC & Ors [2013] VCAT 491
(10 April 2013)

<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VCAT/2013/491.html>

ORDER

Under clause 64 in schedule 1 of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 the permit application is amended by:

(a) Substituting 14 Kanowna Street Williamstown as the address of the land

Under Section 127 of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 the application for review is amended by:

(a) Substituting 14 Kanowna Street Williamstown as the address of the land.

The decision of the responsible authority in relation to permit application no. PA 1224762 is set aside.

A permit is granted in relation to land at 14 Kanowna Street Williamstown. The permit will allow:

Use of the building for the purpose of a display/marketing suite, alterations to the existing building with associated demolition work, reduction of the statutory parking requirement and the provision of car parking spaces on other land.

The permit is subject to the conditions set out in Appendix A...

Conditions include:

.....

1. **(d) The deletion of any change to the two windows facing Kanowna Street and adjacent walls**
2. The use and development as shown on the endorsed plans must not be altered without the written consent of the Responsible Authority.
3. The use may operate only between the hours of 9am-8pm Monday to Friday and 10am-6pm Saturday to Sunday, unless otherwise consented to in writing by the Responsible Authority.
4. **No more than 4 staff must be on the site at any one time, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Responsible Authority.**
5. The amenity of the area must not be detrimentally affected by the use or development for any reason including through the:
 - (a) Transport of materials, goods or commodities to or from the land.
 - (b) Appearance of any building, works or materials.
 - (c) Emission of noise, artificial light, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, vapour, steam, soot, ash, dust, waste water, waste products, grit or oil;or
 - (d) Presence of vermin.
6. The owner, the occupier and the manager of the site must make reasonable endeavours to ensure that people associated with the site do not create a nuisance or annoyance to a neighbour or otherwise disturb the amenity of the area.

SW COMMENT:

This VCAT decision supports the Heritage integrity of the 1911 Britannia Hotel building. Also the member made VERY strict conditions about the number of people present in the building. Only 4 staff are allowed and there is no mention of anyone else being allowed. Potential buyers from

anywhere in Australia or Asia, Private Bankers may all want to gravitate towards this building when Evolve want to hold Off-the-Plan marketing parties in the rooms they have renovated to hold about 200 people.... but FIRST up to comply with this order, the written approval of Hobsons Bay Council is required. Council should be insisting on all the Emergency Evacuation Plan matters being properly adhered to otherwise is it really being the RESPONSIBLBLE AUTHORITY and applying its responsibilities for the community under the OH&S Reguations.

Also Council needs to consider safety matters documented under the HB Planning Scheme. Under section 65 of the planning scheme which the member refers to it states:

- 65.01 Approval of an application or plan

Before deciding on an application or approval of a plan, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:.....

- The degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard."

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Airport Zones and Port Zones provide reverse buffering
& protect industries from residential encroachment

Tuesday, 21 May 2013

Homes under proposed runway's flight path
Updated Mon May 20, 2013 2:01pm AEST

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-20/homes-under-flight-path-of-proposed-runway/4700536?section=vic>

“Three thousand homes could be under the flight path of a proposed third runway for Melbourne Airport.

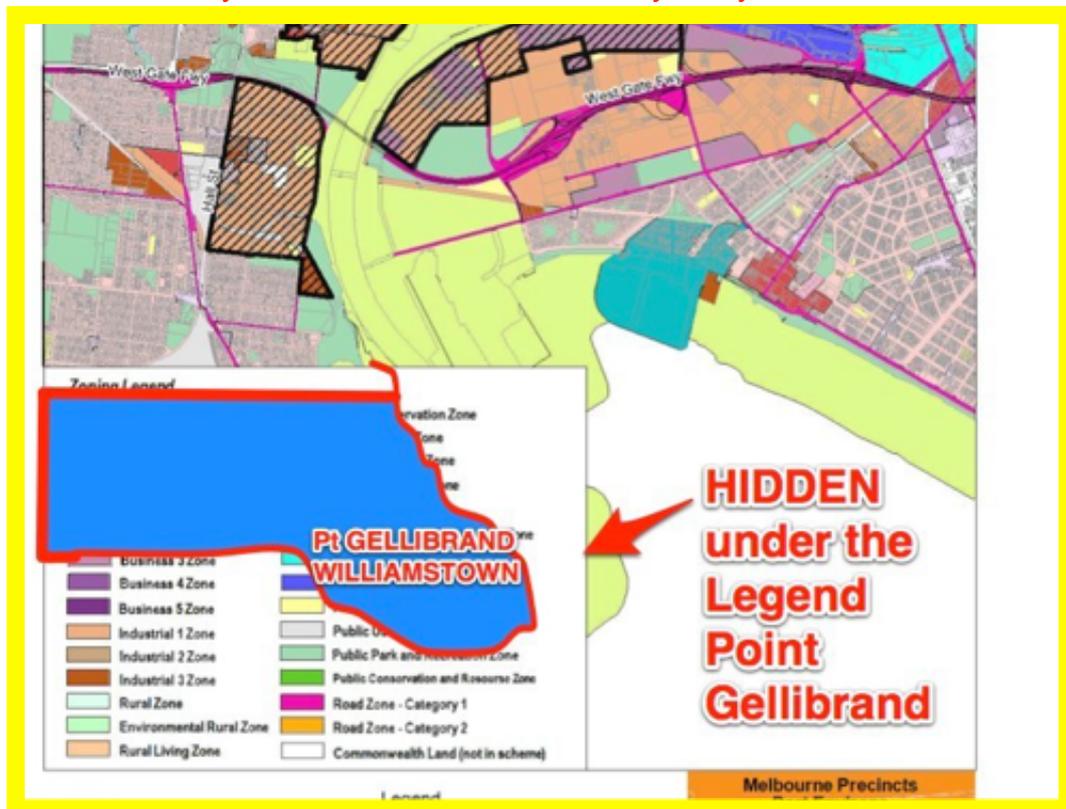
The airport has released its preliminary draft master plan, which includes the proposal for a new east-west runway.

The new runway would be parallel to the existing one and be able to handle big planes like A- 380s.
 The affected properties are mostly to the east of the airport.....”

SW COMMENT:

The Planning and Environment Act has a section on Melbourne Airport and a section on Williamstown Shipyards.. Both sections are specifically in there to PROTECT industry from noise and other complaints by residents whose homes are too close to those industries.

It was an illogical decision when Minister Matthew Guy refused to accept the recommendations about Pt Gellibrand being a Port Zone in the Ports and Environs Advisory Committee report. Maybe BAE Systems want the opportunity to close down and sell their land to housing developers but what does that do for industry in Australia, Victoria and Williamstown. Housing provides the place to eat the bread and butter but it doesn't provide the income to buy the bread and butter because apart from the short impetus of the construction time, there is no continuous production from housing. We need our shipbuilding industry and we need our petrochemical industry all the time we keep using cars and other transport. Allowing NEW residential development which will complain about noise too close to BAE Systems and Mobil MHF is really crazy.



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NEXT WEEK - VCAT fees more than double for
community members fighting developments to \$785.60

Tuesday, 21 May 2013

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Robert Clark MP

Attorney-General

Minister for Finance

Minister for Industrial Relations

Friday 17 May 2013

VCAT fee structure modified following community feedback

www.premier.vic.gov.au

“Attorney-General Robert Clark today announced that the Government has modified key elements of the proposed new VCAT fee structure after considering community feedback from Regulatory Impact Statement consultations

Objectors in planning applications will not be liable to pay any fees if they oppose an application to VCAT by a developer, and those bringing consumer, building or owner corporation claims worth less than \$500 will continue to pay a fee only at the low “community fee” level.

As well, separate fees will no longer be charged for mediations, with user contributions to mediation costs instead being covered from commencement fees.

“The Government has listened and responded to key issues raised during public consultations,” Mr Clark said.

“At the same time, the new fee structure will restore a reasonable balance between taxpayer and user funding and provide VCAT with additional funds so it can hear more cases more quickly.

“Most fees payable by VCAT users will remain well below the full cost of VCAT proceedings, and many lists will continue to have no fee and low fee arrangements.

“Waiver and fee reduction provisions will also continue to apply in cases of hardship.”

“The previous Labor government failed to keep VCAT fees in line with the costs of running VCAT, meaning that an increasing and unreasonable share of the costs of running VCAT has been falling on taxpayers,” Mr Clark said.

Mr Clark said that after carefully considering the more than 250 submissions received as part of the RIS process that commenced in December last year, the Government intended to alter the new fee structure so that:

- fair trading, domestic building and owners corporation claims worth less than \$500 will continue to pay a fee at the “community fee” level, of \$43.90 when the new fees take effect.
- separate mediation fees will no longer be charged, with a portion of the costs of mediation instead being recovered through an addition to application fees. A standard application fee in a planning matter will be \$785.60 when the new fees take effect.
- fees for claims about non-compliance with or improper issue of planning permits will also remain at the “community fee” level.

As at present, an applicant seeking to overturn a decision made by a Council on behalf of the local community about granting a planning permit or the conditions attached to it will continue to pay the standard application fee.

The new fee structure will take effect on 1 June 2013. ”

SW COMMENT:

Well they decided to disadvantage objectors pretty quickly.....

How undemocratic this government is when often objectors are doing the right thing for the PEOPLE OF VICTORIA

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Councils to take on big projects (or does the Minister really mean VCAT)

Tuesday, 21 May 2013

The Age
Tuesday, 21 May 2013

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/councils-to-take-on-big-projects-20130520-2jwzk.html>

“The state government will hand back planning powers to local councils for 21 significant sites across Melbourne including South Wharf and the Whitten Oval redevelopment. Planning Minister Matthew Guy said local councils were best suited to manage local planning decisions and he would return powers to

them for some strategic sites in the next few weeks.....

..... Eleven sites are located in the City of Melbourne and the rest are in metropolitan municipalities.

Municipal Association of Victoria chief executive Rob Spence welcomed the move, and said it would give the community greater input into local planning decisions.

"When matters are called in by the minister you lose that input," he said.

”

SW COMMENT:

This statement was also made about the Former Port Phillip Woollen Mill Site back in November 2011, but immediately after Guy appeared in the Herald Sun article saying he was handing it to council to decide... something contrary actually happened. Despite so called (or FAKE?) consultation with Hobsons Bay Councillors on the Planning Scheme Amendment C86 and DDO11, the DPCD substituted a different document into the Government Gazette which changed the safety requirements from those recommended by the Port Phillip Woollen Mill Advisory Committee Report and viewed by Councillors.

When Hobsons Bay Council asked the developer to co-operate with a Master Plan, we understand the developer said no, not unless we can do high rise. So now Williamstown community is battling a site split into 20 lots each with separate planning applications possible and professional reports which belie the fact that the total development is actually for about 2000 new residents or 20% of the Williamstown Population. And the mantra for the developer “SEE YOU IN VCAT”. They are not even thinking about protecting a heritage hotel on the site, first built in 1854 and possibly the old 3 storey brick hotel in Victoria. Heritage issues

So we would say to Mr Guy, how many well cashed up developers will accept council's decision. Added to this VCAT fees for the community double from 1 June 2013 See VCAT fee rises

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