



News

March 2008 - Newsletter of Glen Eira Residents Association Inc.

www.gleneiraresidents.org.au

IN BRIEF

Our New Committee

At the annual meeting in October the following people were elected as office bearers and committee.

President:	Don Dunstan
Vice President	Cheryl Forge
Treasurer	Max Pleydell
Secretary	Alexander Scutt
Committee	Anne Abbott
	Jack Campbell
	Kevin Robins
	Joy Steward

We were fortunate to have Cr. Jacquie Robilliard in the chair to conduct the elections. After the formalities, we were treated to an inspiring talk by the noted journalist, Kenneth Davidson. (Details see next page).

NOTE: Our rules state that the management committee shall consist of the four officers and the eight ordinary members. At the election four committee were chosen, leaving four vacancies. The Rules empower the committee to appoint others to fill the vacancies.

We invite any member who may be interested in joining the Committee to ring.

CONTACT:

Don Dunstan Ph. 9578 7134
Cheryl Forge Ph. 9509 6290

BREAKING NEWS

State Parliament meets at Glen Eira City Hall!

Well, not quite. But we did have a special hearing held at City Hall, of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Public Land Development.

The Parliamentary committee was 'in town' to conduct a hearing especially to examine the situation of the Caulfield Racecourse. As you may already be aware, it has been revealed and now is widely known, that the land is NOT just reserved for a racecourse. It in fact is also reserved for two other uses, for **public recreation and public park. (The racing people have - strangely enough - been VERY quiet about that!)**

We found that the Select Committee was **very keen** for the land to be properly opened up to the general public. We all hope the Committee will release its report soon. (Watch this space!)

High Point for 2007 - Meeting of Renewal

With the advantage of a capable facilitator, GERA held a meeting at the Caulfield RSL on 29 August, to generate a list of ideas on how we can better consult with our members, and how we can interest other residents more widely.

This had been one of Jack Campbell's initiatives. Jack had clearly recognized that all organizations need to have special moments of critical self-examination. There was strong support for GERA to conduct more public meetings on various issues, across the city.

There should be a survey of interests and skills of members, to see what we all can contribute. We must for example, improve our website to keep its information up to date. **(Any further suggestions would be welcome).**

We often criticize Glen Eira Council for failing to consult, so it is important that we ourselves consult widely.

NEWS IN DEPTH

The AGM was a more notable event than usual, for we were fortunate to have as a special guest speaker, Kenneth Davidson.

A notable journalist and commentator, Kenneth Davidson spoke at length on the need for a comprehensive transport system.

Mr. Davidson often speaks on economic and social affairs, and is co-editor with Lesley Vick (who also attended) of the publication *DISSENT*, which is a new forum for serious analysis of public policy issues in plain language.

Kenneth Davidson certainly spoke in plain language. He spoke disparagingly of the Victorian Governments policy of emphasis on roads, freeways, and toll roads instead of public transport – even to it claiming a saving through abandonment of the former administrations policy that eliminated at least one metropolitan level crossing per year.

‘It is scandalous’ he said, that there was no coherent transport process, no attempt to co-ordinate between the forms of transport, and worst of all, the whole process of planning is secret, compounded by the fact that the whole infrastructure has been hijacked by three banks! The whole issue, Ken claimed, is decided behind closed doors. Freeways and toll ways are the outcomes of these processes with the costs being borne by society at large. Investment in rail transport provides benefits in reduced accidents and more effective use of energy costs, especially with escalation in petrol prices, which will continue. One key, pointed out by Ken, is better co-ordination of trains buses and trams, but the State Government Minister allegedly says she does not want to run a train and bus service, and plans a third line to Dandenong – because, Ken explained, this project can be stretched out for another three years.

What is needed, Ken Davidson stated, is a dynamic **Public Transport Authority**. The bureaucracy has been stripped of its professionals and politicized, the ALP has stopped being accountable to its rank and file, and the State Opposition seems incapable of changing anything.

Thanks to Mr. Davidson The instructive presentation encouraged questions and much discussion, after which he was thanked for his challenging analysis of our public transport systems by Jack Campbell, and Cheryl Forge made a presentation with acclamation.

After taking the Chair, Don Dunstan addressed the meeting briefly. He spoke of the great contribution that Jack Campbell had made over many years, and the meeting passed a Minute of Appreciation for Jacks unstinting work. Jack Campbell will be staying on the committee.

Don concluded by saying that the important issues we face in the year ahead will be (1) public open space, with the opening up of the Caulfield racecourse, (2) involvement with other community groups, like Save Our Suburbs, and (3) concerted action with the recently formed GECA, the new umbrella group for all our community groups in Glen Eira, for which Don is also President, and (4) engaging with Council to ensure open governance, accountability, and consultation.

The year looks exciting already!