

AUBURN WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The existing 9-storey highrise at Gibbons, Macquarie and Rawson Streets will soon appear 'small' when the Auburn Central development in Queen Street is completed.

While many believe that Auburn Central will be a "Westfield-style" shopping centre it will, in fact, be a shopping area that is dwarfed by the flats that will tower overhead. Our RAGAA representative, Irene Simms, is the only councillor to oppose the massive residential component of this development.

While RAGAA fully supports the 'revitalisation of existing shopping centres' (an election promise), the reality is that development in our commercial areas is usually one level of shops with the rest flats.

Even Auburn Central, which will have some major retailers, has almost 500 flats above it. What effect will this development have on the rest of the Auburn shopping centre, given that it does not front Auburn Road which is currently the main shopping street.

We simply believe that the shopping areas should be shops and offices. High rise flats, once built, will not be demolished in the future to make way for more shops.

Other significant development sites in Auburn include 1-5 Harrow Road (next to the ambulance station) which will have 7 storeys. The Auburn Village site is also proposed to be redeveloped with mainly high-rise flats, as is the old Coles site (Mary Street/Harrow Road). The Auburn Arcade site between Auburn and Harrow Roads is still to be built, as is the old Venture site. These will be 8 and 9 storeys. There are also applications for several sites in Queen Street, near the Council building & the new Police Station.

Rawson Street, on the other side of the railway line, is also undergoing significant change. The newly completed 7 storey building on the old Police Station site severely overshadows not just one, but two blocks of adjacent flats. New developments have also been approved behind Keighery's Hotel and at the corner of Northumberland Road next to Moonlight.

While some argue that new residential development will create employment, for every shop that is built, many more flats are erected in the same building. This brings thousands more people to live in Auburn. But how many new jobs are being provided?

Do we have the infrastructure and services to cope with such massive development? Where will the children attend school? Where will they play? Will traffic come to a standstill in Auburn?

RAGAA has consistently opposed over-development in Auburn.

We are true to our election promise..... to be a voice for the residents!

For more information on just what is happening regarding developments in the Auburn Council Area visit our website at www.ragaa.org

With the term of the current Council due to end with the Local Government Election on March 27th 2004, it seems appropriate to review what is happening in the Auburn Local Government Area.

As predicted in a previous newsletter, the skyline of all our suburbs is changing dramatically. Numerous developments are in the process of being built and the 9 storey development near the railway line in Auburn (*the subject of so much controversy*) will soon be dwarfed by the development of Auburn Central, in Queen Street. This project will have many buildings with the highest reaching 14 storeys. **While the addition of shops, such as Big W and Woolworths, should be good for Auburn, there are serious concerns about the 471 flats which are to be built above these shops. After all, neither Bankstown Square nor the Westfield complexes have residential above them.**

Recent outbursts in the gallery by those who have come to observe Council meetings, are a sign that many residents are frustrated with Council & its Councillors. A number of petitions, Letters to the Editor and the formation of several community groups, such as the Residents for a Better Berala, are further evidence of this.

RAGAA has always promised to be a voice for the residents, and we do not deny the right of people to develop. We do maintain, however, that this development should not come at the expense of neighbours. They have a right to privacy, sunlight and protection from inappropriate development.

Overdevelopment leads to other pressures on our infrastructure...schools, hospitals, parklands, traffic, parking and other community services.

The reality is that most development in our area is 'infill', that is, pushed into existing built areas.

COLLEX: RAGAA has been opposed to this waste plant since the application first came to Auburn Council's notice.

Many of our members attended the recent rally outside Parliament House. Cr Irene Simms (RAGAA) and the mayor met with Michael Richardson (*the shadow minister for the environment*) on Dec 1st. They also met with the NSW upper-house cross-benchers on December 2nd (*with John Drake, Allan Brzoson and Cr Maureen Walsh from Parramatta*) to try to convince them why they should oppose the bill introduced by Labor to overturn the Land and Environment Court win by John & Allan.

As residents would be aware, the bill was passed, although it was opposed by the Liberal party and, we are pleased to say, nearly all of the cross-benchers who had been lobbied. **It should be noted that both our state member, Barbara Perry and Granville's, Kim Yeadon, voted for the waste plant.**

ENVIRONMENT: Following an invitation from SOPA, Irene Simms (RAGAA) is on the Sydney Olympic Parklands Authority Parklands Advisory Committee, which advises the SOPA board regarding the Millennium Parklands.

Several of our members work on various Duck River committees, and are involved in the local environment group, Auburn Greenspace.