

Good Morning,

My name is [REDACTED], I am the [REDACTED]. Today I speak on behalf of myself and my husband [REDACTED] with regards to our **submission** for our property at [REDACTED], being 2.4 Hectres (Parcel 34 Beveridge Central Precinct Structure Plan [PSP]).

Under this planning scheme the Mitchell Shire Council and VPA have placed a Reserve for Active Open Space [AOS] on our land along with 2 neighboring properties, to be used as a future Local Sports Reserve. When Beveridge Central PSP is approved a Public Acquisition Overlay [PAO] will be placed on this land.

OVERVIEW:

- **July 2005;** we purchased [REDACTED] as an investment property for our retirement
- **October 2013;** Beveridge landowners were sent notification from The Growth Areas authority [GAA], regarding the preparation of the Precinct Structure Plan [PSP]. The draft plan marked [REDACTED] as Active Open Space. I emailed a submission to Matt Garner, Structure Planning Manager, outlining our concerns regarding the position of this AOS. There was ample alternative land in the area suitable for the AOS, including directly across the road. I asked for a clear understanding of the timing of acquisition and value of compensation from the council. Our concerns being the impact this would have on our retirement and financial future. After many emails to Matt Garner, no contact was received from this department or any other department.
- **November 2016;** Beveridge landowners received an information brochure from the VPA regarding the Beveridge Central Infrastructure Contributions Plan [ICP] with the development of the PSP. Our land was still Reserved for Active Open Space. We attended an information night where we were informed by the VPA representative that it was council's decision for the AOS to remain located in the proposed position. The representative informed us discussions were held between VPA and the council, where VPA suggested council consider changing the position. They also reminded Mitchell Shire Council it had **NO money** to acquire the land. We were told on the night council could not acquire the land until the Infrastructure Contribution Plan [ICP] commenced but no one knew when that would be.
- **December 2016;** Once again, I lodged a submission regarding the position of the AOS. I advised how it would affect our ability to sell our property and therefore be detrimental to us financially. Due to the council and VPA placing a Reserve for AOS on our land we are unable to sell as buyers were not interested in land that could not be developed. I explained we were no longer financially able to keep the land and needed to sell now. I requested an acquisition time and method as to how and when payment from council would be made.

After lodging the submission I emailed the Mitchell shire Councilors to organize a meeting with them and other affected land owners.

- I emailed Travis Conway , Strategic Planning Officer for Mitchell Shire and organized a meeting with Sth Ward Councilors , Strategic Planners and landowners involved. This meeting was held on the **16th January 2017**. Our concerns were raised about location, and questions were asked as to why the 27 hectares of vacant land directly across the road on the North side of Lithgow St was not considered for the AOS. I explained our financial situation had become urgent and we now needed to sell the land . None of the matters raised were resolved at this meeting.
- **10th February 2017** A meeting was held with Landowners, Council Strategic Planners, Councilors , VPA Representatives , Independent Valuer organized by the VPA to value the lots of land involved. Our concerns were once again raised at this meeting with no outcome. Following this meeting we received a letter from VPA proposing to reduce the parcels of land from 4 to 3, noted under this scenario the changes to location and size of the sports reserve would not remove or reduce the proposed sports reserve from our property. The site for this Sport Oval has been amended twice. A letter regarding the land valuation was later received.

On advise from Stephen Davis from VPA, I once again contacted Travis Conway and Council CEO David Turnbull to organize a meeting to negotiate with council regarding date of acquisition once PSP was approved , the terms of payment and to discuss our current financial situation . Mr Davis advised me that landowners should not be financially disadvantaged during the process of the PSP.

- The meeting was held on 22nd March 2017 Council CEO David Turnbull, Councilors , or Strategic Planners could or would commit as to when acquisition would occur once PSP was approved. Suggesting the earliest date would be at least 3 years, however it could be as long as 5 – 15 years before the land was needed. As far as payment, Mr Turnbull informed us “The council have **NO Money** to purchase this land, and would have to wait until Infrastructure Contribution Plans [ICP] started . This could be several years as development needed to commence “. I advised the meeting again that we were not in a financial position to wait for this to happen and age was not on our side. I once again asked why 100 % of our 2.48 Hectres of land was Reserved for AOS whilst there was 27 hectares of vacant land directly across the road marked for development. The response I received “ The vacant land on the north side of Lithgow street would not be suitable as the AOS needs to be within walking distance of the future primary school, future shop and future community centre situated in Mandalay Estate”, I pointed out that directly across the road was within walking distance, in fact closer than my land, and the vacant land and primary school practically joined on another. I questioned as to why there was no AOS for a Sports Oval allocated in Mandalay Estate. There was no resolution to any of these matters at this meeting.

Over the past couple of weeks I acquired from council, hard copies of :

- **Mitchell Shire Council Plan 2017 -2021.**
- **Mitchell Shire Council Strategic Resource Plan 2018 – 2021**
- **Mitchell Shire Council Budget 2017 -18 with projections till 2021.**

After many hours of extensive reading I noted the following:

1. The Council Plan 2017 -2021 under the heading Responsible Planning , Key Strategies - Open Space

- **Actions :** Collaborate with the VPA on PSP in Melbourne's northern growth corridor
- **Measures :** Significant stakeholder engagement occurs with the VPA and other key state government agencies in the preparation and development of Precinct Structure Plans [PSPs] and Infrastructure Contribution Plans { ICP s}.
- **Values :** The following are listed; Respect, Accountability & Responsible Planning. Responsible Planning/ Strategic Objectives are 'To demand best practice outcome when planning for future growth '.

There is NO mention regarding the acquisition of our land for Active Open Space in Beveridge throughout the whole of The Council Plan 2017 - 2021, Strategic Resource Plan 2018-2021 or the Council Budge 2017-2018. Therefore I assume we cannot expect results or commitment from the Council during this time frame.

2. The Mitchell Shire Open Space Strategy 2013 -2023

- **Key Issues:**
 - 'Councils preferred method of funding infrastructure in growth & established areas is thru development contributions'
 - 'Development Contributions however do not cover the full costs & infrastructure work. In other growth areas, councils have required matched or external funding, generally from the following three key sources: Rates Revenue, Borrowings, and Grants'
 - 'Many of the recommended actions in this plan are aspirational, & will only be funded when land development occurs or directly relevant grants become available. Therefore the time frame for implementation of priorities cannot be practically determined'
 - 'The council is Encouraging State to acquire all or part of these sites'
 - Private open space in new residential areas in the south will be limited'
 - Develop land acquisition framework to improve next provision of open space network in shire "

- Under Appendices; “Where possible open space facilities such as sport reserves should be co – located with schools.”

If this is the case then why hasn't the VPA & Council worked with developers to place this AOS within their development, including Mandalay Estate.

- **Affordability :**
 - ‘Mitchell shire & its communities are forced with resource restraints, there are limited finances that can be directed into open space provision & development.’
 - ‘Council will continue to rely on open space contributions from developers for open space works. These funds should be allocated to both local & regional space developments & priority be spent where they are generated.’
 - ‘Council will not be able to meet all residents open space needs with development contributions, as such alternative funding sources will be required.’
 - With regards to Beveridge; ‘Work in partnership with land developers & other agencies to acquire land for open space ensuring appropriate provision in Beveridge growth areas.’

VPA Submission

- **Part A:**
 - Introduction states: “ The VPA have worked extensively with landowners to resolve submissions”

I argue against this, none of the issues we raised have been resolved or alternatives offered. I instigated all meetings to which the VPA attended one. No definitive answer has been given regarding acquisition, payments and moving the AOS from our property. No party is concerned about the burden, stress and financial pressure they have placed on us.

Being told your land cannot be sold for development makes it impossible to place it on the market for sale .No one is interested in purchasing land that cannot be developed, they do no to purchase this land from us hoping that sometime in the unforeseeable future council will purchase it from them. To Council and VPA this is strictly business and planning for the future of Beveridge however for us this is a stressful, financial burden at a time when our retirement that should be enjoyable. We are informed by Council they will need to acquire the land, but do not have any idea when ,and do not know how or when they will pay for the land. What position does that leave us in ? How can you consider purchasing land without giving a time frame or having the money for the purchase?

A developers representative confirmed developers would not be interested in purchasing land they cannot develop, and if remotely did consider it, the price would come nowhere near the valuation. It would be between \$ 1-\$2 Million but nowhere near the \$2 M. We would loose a significant amount money in this scenario. Money we cannot and should not have to loose.

Being a landowner within the PS, we should be very happy with the prospect of our land being of significant value, \$ 2,481,000 as valued by the VPA Independent Valuer . Unfortunately the decision that has been made regarding our land for AOS has left us in a dire financial situation.

We have land that we cannot sell as it cannot be developed due to the Reserve for AOS, therefore no party is interested in purchase. We are unable to receive any commitment from Mitchell Shire Council or the VPA regarding a timeframe for acquisition and payment.

My husband and I had a 10 year Plan when we purchased this land in 2005. This being the land would be sold to fund our retirement & pay out our mortgages. That plan expired last year and there is **NO** other plan. I am currently 65, my husband [REDACTED] is 69 therefore time is of the essence. We simply cannot wait 5, 10 or 15 year for council acquisition. VPA and Mitchell Shire Council may have their plan for the future community of Beveridge but we have been part of the community for 24 years, what about the plan we had for our future?

We both retired 8 years ago after owning a Transport Company for 40 years, My husband worked extremely long hours to set us up for our future. Should [REDACTED] be expected at 69 to come out of retirement work long hours again because of this situation with the council? During 8 years of retirement we have fully funded mortgage repayments, rates and living expenses out of our savings, sale of assets including property. This land is our last asset for sale allowing us to continue to live in our family home, without worrying about our future and current finances. We are not eligible to receive age pension whilst we own this property. Our plan was to financially support ourselves through our retirement.

Our family home is at [REDACTED], where we have lived for the past 24 years.

We currently have approx \$400,000 mortgage on [REDACTED] which is \$40,000 annual including rates.

And approx \$300,000 on [REDACTED] being our family home this is \$30,000 annual including rates.

These mortgage payments had been placed on hold for the past 6 months but resumed again last month. The position we find ourselves in, being forced to sell our family home at a considerable loss to pay off the mortgages , buy another home ,and hope the remaining money lasts whilst waiting for council to make a decision regarding the land in Lithgow street . Why have we been placed in a situation where we are forced to unwillingly keep land that we want and need to sell for an indefinite time? The sale of this property is not about luxury holidays it is about our financial survival. How can the law allow this to happen ?

We have valuable land we urgently need to sell but cannot mortgages we will soon not be able to meet, rates to pay and general living expenses. How are we expected to do this whilst waiting years for a council decision and commitment.

Whilst our land has a Reserved for AOS on it, followed by a Public Acquisition Overlay placed once PSP is approved we are unable to sell this property. I am asking this panel to give the VPA and the Mitchell Shire Council some direction to resolve our submission. We need to have the Reserve for AOS lifted off our land before the PSP is approved to enable us to sell now or move the AOS to another site. Why hasn't moving the AOS to other vacant land been considered over the past 3 years? Why haven't the VPA and Council worked with developers to place AOS for a Sports Oval within their developments? If our land is considered to be the only suitable land for this AOS, then we ask the panel to advise and guide the Council regarding Acquisition and Payment. We will be no longer able to make mortgage payments in 6 months as we simply do not have the money.

Waiting for the PSP and Infrastructure Contribution Plans [ICP] to begin is time we do not have. The council mentioned this will be years and there is no guarantee where this money will be directed.

Is it unreasonable for Council to acquire and purchase our land now at the valuation price? Due to our financial situation waiting is NOT an option we have.

We are asking that this Active Open Space is a short term priority for Mitchell Shire Council .

Members of the Panel we are asking for your help and recommendation to help solve our submission. Our financial future depends on decisions made by this panel to right this wrong. We need the Reserve for AOS to be lifted off our land before the PSP is approved to enable us to sell. We never volunteered this land for AOS and should have the right to sell now instead of being forced to wait indefinitely, and have the right to plan our future.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]