

# **Aurora Community Association General Meeting**

**Wednesday 19 September, 7pm**

## **Epping Views Primary School**

Attendees: Griff Davis, Toni-Marie Wuelfert, Kathleen Ager, Khush Siganporia, Kerryn Pike, Dan Rudolph, Kerryn Rudolph, Tony Francis, Kris Pavlidis, Mary Agostino, Cara Horner, Joanna Durst, Tracey Millen, Alan Cobb, Dimitri Dimech, Peter Wuelfert, Tinicka Bussau, Katerine Dimla, Amanda Meyers, Wayne Meyers, Joan Salten, Thomas Dipalma, Carolyn Ong, Justin Chen, George Haritonidis, Claire Butler

Apologies: Roger Liang

- Toni-Marie welcomed the attendees, and thanked them for coming. She also introduced herself, as the new President, as well as the rest of the committee, and guest speaker Griff Davis, Director of Advocacy & Communications, City of Whittlesea.
- Griff Davis presented his role within the Whittlesea council, which is to advocate for the Council and residents of Whittlesea with the State and Federal Governments. This position is unique in Australia. Griff also introduced Mary Agostino who assists him in his task.
- Griff's comprehensive presentation covered the following points:
  - State government has encouraged rapid development in the outer Whittlesea corridor, but has not provided the necessary level of infrastructure. Every year, the population of Whittlesea increases by the size of the population of Swan Hill (8500 to 9000 people), yet only one new school is being added per year.
  - There is a need to look at this imbalance in terms of its human costs. There is a strong link between transport disadvantage, social exclusion and wellbeing.  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0739885910000661>
  - In 2008, a bus service review was conducted in which the State government planned to 'saturate' Whittlesea with buses. This never materialised. The Epping to South Morang railway extension has compounded the issue, as buses have been cancelled, and there are only 25 parking spaces provided at the Epping Railway station.
  - The Council is looking at the issue in a holistic fashion, focusing on mixed development. Roads, public transport, employment opportunities, educational facilities and community services all needed to progress simultaneously to ensure sustainable development.
  - Although there has been some successes (attracting the Footscray Market to Epping, the South Morang railway extension, medical precinct building), funding by both State and Federal Governments is insufficient. Only one school will be built in Whittlesea in the next two years.
  - The extension of Edgars' Road between Cooper Street and O'Herns is a priority, as is the railway extension to North Epping and beyond. Also, full clover ramps to the Hume Freeway. In the meantime, more buses are needed. Currently traffic is exceptionally bad, due to the Craigieburn Road closure. It is taking people up to 40 minutes to travel (from Craigieburn Rd?) to Cooper Street.
  - The State Government is not communicating well with the Council. There is no consultation process. An infrastructure fund is needed, with innovative ways of

financing this fund, such as private and overseas investment. Also, property developers need to be made accountable for the infrastructure required for their estates.

- The Council, on its own, does not have leverage without the active support of the communities affected. We need to organise demonstrations, events, petitions, talk back radio appearances and letter writing. The South Morang Rail Alliance was largely instrumental in getting the Epping-South Morang railway extension built.
- Griff's talk was very well received, but concerns were raised over poor attendance at the meeting. Suggestions were made as to how to increase attendance and active participation.
  - Every one to commit to bringing two extra people to the next meeting (next door neighbours?)
  - Use social media to advertise the presence of the association and committee meetings.
  - Introduce better PR and marketing strategies.
  - Encourage use of the forum on the ACA webpage.
  - Jazz up notifications of meetings, to make them more attractive, highlighting issues to be addressed.
  - Reintroduce a 7.30 start.
  - Emphasise that no improvements will happen without direct involvement and action from the broader community – not just committee members.
  - Being more aggressive about issues and promoting widely.
  - Emphasise loss of productivity and additional costs caused by lengthy traffic queues.
  - Highlight the absurdity of having bus shelters/stops with no service.
  - Griff mentioned the example of a letter sent by a school girl, explaining that it took her 40 minutes to reach Cooper Street from home, but only 20 minutes to reach her school in Essendon after that.
  - Councillor Kris Pavlidis, and both Griff and Mary Agostino offered their support.

It was decided that a working group should be set up to specifically look at transport issues.

Toni-Marie thanked Griff Davis for his excellent presentation, and closed the meeting at 9.15pm.