



GLEN EIRA
CITY COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 11 May 2018

Council disappointed with latest VCAT judgement

Glen Eira City Council is disappointed that the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) has approved an 11 storey building for the redevelopment of the Bethlehem Hospital. While Council acknowledges the importance of the facility, it considers that the scale of the building is at odds with the character of the area as it will tower above the surrounding houses and that it should not have been approved.

The hospital is within the Neighbourhood Residential Zone, being a zone commonly applied throughout Victoria that has a mandatory height limit on 'residential' developments of two storeys. The planning scheme's application of the mandatory height limit is quite narrow and applies to single dwellings or multi-dwelling developments, but does not apply to other developments that are residential in nature; such as a retirement village, or residential aged care facility. VCAT categorised the Bethlehem proposal as both these, amongst other things including a hospital.

Glen Eira Mayor Cr Tony Athanasopoulos said that Council has long advocated that this aspect of the residential zones be resolved to apply the mandatory height to all buildings regardless of the use.

"A submission was provided at the time the State Government consulted on its Reformed Residential Zone package, and more recently, a submission was provided to the Managing Residential Development Advisory Committee."

"Given the outcome of this decision, Council will continue to advocate for changes to the planning scheme to ensure that the scale of development in our local residential areas is protected," Cr Athanasopoulos said.

In defending its decision to refuse a planning permit, Council was represented at VCAT by a law firm with a specialist planning team. The representation also included evidence from urban design and traffic engineering experts and sought to persuade the Tribunal that the height of the development was inappropriate for the largely low scale residential area. The Tribunal however considered that the benefit of the proposal, by providing a modern hospital facility, retirement village, residential aged care facility and supporting services outweighed any impact the height would have. Council maintains that the height will have a negative impact on the local community.

While this approval might be seen to open the flood gates for applications of a similar nature in our residential areas, Council will consider all applications on their own merit which will include having regard to the prevailing height of the area.

Media enquiries: Amarita Kinnoo
03 9524 3411

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL
CORNER GLEN EIRA AND HAWTHORN ROADS, CAULFIELD, VIC
PO BOX 42, CAULFIELD SOUTH 3162
P 03 9524 3333 • F 03 9523 0339
GLENEIRA.VIC.GOV.AU

