



NORTHBRIDGE
PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Working for the advancement of Northbridge since 1919

ABN 733 956 702

PO Box 357 Northbridge 2063

July 16 2008

Mr Martin McCurrich
Chairman, Reference Committee
Northbridge Plaza and Council Car Park Masterplan
c/ Willoughby City Council.

Dear Martin,

In reviewing the draft Technical Review Paper, it has become evident to the committee of Northbridge Progress Association that the TWG has relied solely upon the surveys carried out by its consultants to judge the reaction of the community to a Plaza redevelopment. There is no input direct from the communities most concerned. The NPA has not, for example, provided to the RC or TWG direct evidence of the Northbridge community's attitude to a Plaza redevelopment.

Similarly, other progress associations in Willoughby have not been asked to provide evidence of their community's attitude. The Association will be seeking such input from appropriate progress associations in Willoughby. We will forward these to RC as they become available.

This absence of information may account for the statement of an AMP spokesperson who was reported as saying in June 2008: "We have a minority here who are very anti-development". In fact, we believe that a large majority of Northbridge people are opposed to significant retail expansion on the Masterplan site but very few are opposed to reasonable residential development along Eastern Valley Way.

We don't claim to represent all Northbridge residents, nor have we carried out formal surveys of Northbridge residents. Nevertheless, it is NPA's perception that there is strong, widespread opposition in Northbridge to retail expansion of the Plaza, mainly based on fears of increased traffic congestion. We base this conclusion on the following:

- NPA has around 300 members, representing about 10% of Northbridge households. We believe this is a high percentage for a community organisation even though we do not actively promote membership (except through a small form in *The 202* newsletter). NPA's membership is spread throughout the suburb, geographically and socially.

- NPA's newsletter, *The 202*, is delivered to every household in Northbridge. There is ample evidence to claim it is very well read by residents. *The 202* has made NPA's position on a Plaza retail expansion very clear with high profile articles, particularly in the past year or so. Despite these articles, and the ready availability of an email address and website, NPA has received **only one** email or letter supporting a Plaza redevelopment (which we published in *The 202* in July 2008).
- In July 2007, NPA held a meeting attended by more than 150 members and residents. The meeting unanimously supported a resolution limiting retail expansion to about 10% but with no such constraint on residential development. A meeting in May 2008 attended by 70 people similarly supported NPA's position. Each meeting was attended by several councillors (including the Mayor in July 2007) and by representatives of several progress Associations. We cannot remember **one** resident at these meetings who spoke in favour of a retail expansion at the Plaza. We have attached the minutes from these two meetings, for your information.
- Although the phone number of each NPA committee member is published in *The 202*, NPA committee members have not received **one** phone call or encountered **one** resident who supports a Plaza expansion. There may be Northbridge residents who would support a Plaza retail expansion but, if so, they have not made themselves known to NPA.
- Despite NPA's well-publicised position on a Plaza expansion, local businesses in Northbridge (including several Plaza tenants) have supported NPA through advertising in *The 202*. Although *The 202* never needs to actively seek out advertisers, its advertising revenue has consistently increased (without any increase in rates) over several years.
- Its members have generously supported NPA's costs of participating in the Plaza Masterplan process with donations of \$14,400 in the past financial year. NPA has not yet approached the general Northbridge community for donations.

We ask that RC and TWG take these facts and observations into consideration before finalizing the TRP.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Lye
NPA representative, Reference Committee

Attach: Minutes of NPA General Meeting held on July 18 2007
Minutes of NPA General Meeting held on May 14 2008