Climate Action Moreland
P.O. Box 381
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climateactionmoreland.org

Ms Lizzie Blandthorn MP (Pascoe Vale)
416a Bell Street, Pascoe Vale, VIC 3044

Re Upgrade to Merlynston Station Car Park
arising from a 2018 election promise

Dear Ms Blandthorn,

We would first like to congratulate you on your re-election in November 2018 as the MP for Pascoe Vale, and appreciate your support in signing the climate emergency declaration during the election campaign.

We would like to draw your attention to an election promise by the Andrews Government regarding upgrade of car parking and facilities around Merlynston Station.

> New Train Station Car Parks For Pascoe Vale Commuters
> https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/new-train-station-car-parks-for-pascoe-vale-commuters/

We note the commitment includes upgrade from 218 to 355 car parks, addition of Parkiteer bike security cage, extra CCTV and lighting for security, and construction of the Upfield Bike Path past the station to replace the route presently along Bain Avenue.

Importance of mitigating the Urban heat island effect with green infrastructure

I would like to draw your attention to the issue of the very strong urban heat island effect within Moreland, and the need, whenever public infrastructure is being upgraded, to use best design principles and products to minimise or reduce the urban heat island effect in Moreland's built environment.

In the 'Where should all the Trees go?' document of the 202020 vision[1], Moreland City Council is given a urban heat vulnerability rating of 1 out of 5, along with City of Brimbank and Maribyrnong City Council. A low score means high heat vulnerability. Urban heat is a significant social disruptor and public health issue during Summer months.

The upgrade of the Merlynston car park is a perfect opportunity to improve urban heat mitigation through good design.

1 202020 Vision, see http://202020vision.com.au/
Where should all the trees Go report (2016)
http://202020vision.com.au/media/162691/wsattg_combined-lr.pdf

Use of Permeable pavement could minimise flood risk

The upgrade to the station car park should include as much permeable pavement material as possible, so that rain can soak into the soil and not add to the stormwater runoff and risk exacerbating local flash flooding.

The Climate Council identified in a factsheet in 2017 that torrential rainfall events are becoming more common. “Climate change is influencing all extreme rainfall events. The warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, about 7% more than previously. This increases the risk of heavier downpours. Extreme rainfall events are expected to increase in intensity in Australia.” [1]

There is a 1 in 100 year flood zone nearby in North Coburg along the route of Merlynston Creek which is in an underground culvert. Excess runoff from Merlynston station car park could exacerbate local flash flooding events.[2]

Where permeable pavements cannot be employed, water should be directed into raingarden catchments for local vegetation. This is standard best practice for water sensitive urban design and there is an opportunity to use this as part of Merlynston Station car park upgrade.

Paved Car parks by their very nature tend to absorb a lot of heat. I have measured asphalt surface temperatures in Moreland at over 70 degrees celsius. Using lighter coloured pavement material can reduce surface temperatures on the hottest days by up to 20 degrees.

The provision of trees to provide canopy shade is an important method of reducing local heat. Trees can also be part of raingardens accessing runoff water and provide other environmental services (including filtering the air, adding habitat for wildlife). Trees shading pavement can make a huge difference in surface temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius or more.

The Moreland Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan identifies important roles for the state Government which should be applied to the Merlynston Station car park upgrade:[3]

> “• Demonstrate leadership by setting clear progressive positions on climate mitigation and adaptation including green infrastructure, sustainable transport, climate resilient buildings and communities
> • Support infrastructure development that incorporates active and public transport and water sensitive urban design
> • Coordinate, support and fund green infrastructure”

Facilitating Electric Vehicles in Moreland

This is an opportunity to increase Electric Vehicle charging stations in Moreland. Some car parks can have shelters with solar panels and an EV charging port. Residents with electric vehicles can leave their car in the shade and plug in to recharge their vehicle while they are in the city. State

1 Climate Council (2017) Facsheet on intense rainfall and flooding.
https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/factsheet-climate-change-and-intense-rainfall-and-flooding/

2 SES North Coburg Flood Guide, https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/documents/112015/134769/Local+flood+guide+-+Coburg+North/0ae1f1eb-bdd3-4044-9031-efb2bb2a7554

3 Moreland Council, Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan 2016/2017 – 2025/2026
https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/environment-bins/environment/climate-change/urban-heat-island/
https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/globalassets/areas/esd/esd-uhie-urban-heat-island-effect---action-plan---final-draft-for-council-june-2016.pdf

Government should be pro-active in facilitating transition to electric vehicles.

Encouraging mode share change to cycling

As highlighted in the media release, the car park upgrade is also a great opportunity to incorporate a short upgrade to the Upfield Bike Path that presently uses Bain Avenue for the route.

We also applaud adding a Parkiteer bike locker cage at Merlynston, and feel this will encourage some residents from Coburg North and Fawkner to ride rather than drive to the station. This is important for encouraging mode-share change as part of reducing transport emissions.

Upgrade to Upfield Line

As a member of the Upfield Transport Alliance we also draw your attention to the high priority need to duplicate the track on the Upfield rail line to increase reliability and allow for increased frequency of service.

We urge consideration of Track duplication between Gowrie and Upfield as part of level crossing removal in Coburg to minimise disruption to passengers on the line.

We think extension of the line to Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn needs to be urgently considered to allow better train stabling, as well as train maintenance, to allow for more trains to be used on the line and increased service frequency. It will also relieve pressure on the Broadmeadows line that is reaching capacity.

With much urban consolidation taking place in southern Hume suburbs, and in new peri-urban suburbs around Mickleham and Wallan, and many high rise developments taking place in Brunswick and Coburg (and we note in particular the Pentridge towers development) there is an urgent need to assess increasing service reliability and frequency on the Upfield line and the infrastructure upgrades this will entail.

We note that a $5 million study has been undertaken and completed to upgrade and extend the Upfield line and eagerly await the release of this taxpayer funded report.

We would be pleased if you could forward this to relevant authorities that will be designing and constructing the upgrade of the Merlynston car park. We would like to be kept informed with all progress on this upgrade.

John Englart
on behalf of Climate Action Moreland
(this letter was authorised by a meeting of Climate Action Moreland on 18 February 2019)

cc: Moreland Council Mayor and North East Ward Councillors,
Moreland BUG,
Upfield Transport Alliance
Extend the Upfield Bike Path Campaign