



ratio consultants newsletter february 2009

ratio wins UDIA "award for excellence"

Each year, the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) recognises Professional Consultants' achievements in their National Awards for Excellence. In December 2008 Ratio Consultants were recognised for their involvement in the "Cheltenham Green Development" as winner of an Award for Excellence in the category of Urban Renewal Projects. The Cheltenham Green Development



residential apartments - The Cheltenham Green Development

involved the refurbishment and conversion of Retreat House in Cavanagh Street, Cheltenham into residential apartments as well as the subdivision of the remainder of the site into small lots for townhouse and standard residential development. Ratio's traffic team was involved in the assessment of, and input to, the traffic, road network and parking aspects of the development plan for the site. **Congratulations** to Russell Symons and Melissa Merrick.

ratio's additional services

In response to client demand, Ratio Consultants now offers a range of additional services to meet the needs of clients and architects, including preparation of ResCode tables, Property Reports, car park and waste management plans amongst other new services. This 'suite' of options enables our involvement in specific matters, providing a cost effective approach to town planning, which is tailor-made to meet specific requirements. Ratio still provides its more comprehensive planning services, including pre-application meetings and advice, a detailed planning submission and application management. For more information, visit our new and improved website, www.ratio.com.au

this months featured project is..... seaford life saving club

Ratio Consultants is proud to have been involved with the award-winning Seaford Life Saving Club project designed by Robert Simeoni Architects. This leading edge building has won numerous awards, including:

- 2008 Australian Institute of Architects National Public Architecture Award;
- 2008 Victorian AIA Marion Mahony Interior Architecture Award;
- 2008 Premier's Design Award for Cultural Architecture; and
- Outdoor Timber Award, Best Use of Engineered Timber Products and Highly Commended in the Public and Commercial Buildings category in the 2008 Australian Timber Design Awards.

The design successfully minimises disturbance to the fragile coastal environment, whilst incorporating environmentally sustainable design principles, such as strong horizontal elements to provide shade, security, sunlight control, ventilation and transparency.

Ratio **congratulates** Robert Simeoni Architects on their exemplary design.



Source: <http://www.frankston.vic.gov.au>

ratio at forefront of gaming applications - the langwarrin hotel

On 17 September 2007 the State Government introduced new planning provisions relating to Gaming at Clause 52.28 of all planning schemes. These provisions state that "a permit is required to install or use a gaming machine". The Clause also sets out a series of decision guidelines which the Responsible Authority must consider in deciding on an application.

Ratio Consultants were recently involved in a proposal to install 16 Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) at the Langwarrin Hotel, which was one of the very first applications for the installation of EGMs following the introduction of this legislation.

Daniel Soussan of Ratio gave socio-economic evidence at the initial gaming hearing before the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR). Ultimately, the Commission accepted the evidence of Mr Soussan, and determined to approve the proposal subject to conditions. No appeals were lodged by Frankston City Council against the decision of the VCGR, however Council still opposed the planning permit application that followed. This led to an appeal of the planning merits before the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

Daniel Soussan was again called to give evidence (this time focussing on the planning merits). VCAT also accepted the evidence presented and determined to grant planning approval for the installation of the 16 EGMs.

The decision has been published by the Tribunal as a significant "Red Dot" decision and provides some very specific guidance regarding the application of Clause 52.28 and assists in clarifying the role of the Tribunal in relation to the Gaming Commission.

For further information or for any inquiries relating to gaming, please contact either Daniel Soussan or Colleen Peterson on (03) 9429 3111.



langwarrin hotel



This issue, we cast our eyes on.....

Passions:

Favourite Website:

Happiest day of your life:

What am I reading right now:

Colleen Peterson, Director

Travel, good food and wine, living in Richmond and my family (including my dogs).

Bureau of Meteorology – I am obsessed about the weather.

I know I am meant to say the day I got married or the birth of my daughter, but it was really the day Essendon won the flag in 2000. Needless to say I have been depressed ever since.

Embarrassingly, it is Melbourne @ 5 million. Trying to get up to speed on the latest government 'initiative'.



ratio

brumby announcement about fast-tracking permits

On Wednesday 4 February 2009 Premier John Brumby announced the Victorian Government would introduce new planning reforms to fast-track key building projects; as part of Victoria's strategy to create more jobs in conjunction with provision for more affordable housing.

Key reforms to speed up investment and jobs will involve the State Government calling in certain classes of development applications, particularly those that will deliver economic and employment benefits while meeting the Government's planning policy objectives.

The Government has not explicitly set out criteria for determining which applications will be "fast tracked", nor have they suggested how this fast tracking will occur, however based on the various projects mentioned in the press release it would appear that selection will be based (at least in part) on the scale of the proposal, its construction value, and the quantity of direct and indirect jobs created.

Following Mr Brumby's announcement, the Minister for Planning Justin Madden stated that the Government would seek to "provide clear guidance and ensure that well designed projects will be approved in a reasonable time". However, Mr Madden was quick to note that development proposals would not be approved at any cost, stating: "I can also give an assurance that decisions will be transparent and community views will continue to be sought".

(The Premier of Victoria www.premier.vic.gov.au)

Ratio Consultants is committed to keeping our clients updated on this important development, and will maintain open communication with you regarding advice on the upcoming planning reforms. We will continue to look at opportunities to approach the State Government on projects where appropriate.

BRW corporate triathlon

Ratio is very proud that we have 2 teams made up of planning and traffic consultants competing in this years BRW Corporate Triathlon, to be held on the 1st March 2009.

'The Right Ratio' and 'Ratio Rockets' have been training hard (or so they tell us) and assure us that they will do us proud! Feel free to come on down to Elwood and cheer on our teams as they leave the rest of Corporate Victoria in their dust!



dianne hawke, inan soedarsono, simon martin & james brownlie

height limits proposed for new residential zones

The State Government has recently released the "New residential zones for Victoria – Consultation Draft" in response to concerns expressed by Local Council's about the effectiveness of local policies in managing some forms of new development.

The paper proposes three 'new' zones:

- Residential 1 Zone (R1Z) – Incremental Change Zone
- Residential 2 Zone (R2Z) – Substantial Change Zone
- Residential 3 Zone (R3Z) – Limited Change Zone

The most significant changes proposed are as follows:

Mandatory Height Limits

It is proposed to introduce **mandatory** height limits across all of the new residential zones, as follows:

- R1Z – 9m (3 storeys) – although Councils can amend the schedule to either increase or decrease this height limit at their discretion.
- R2Z – 13.5m (4 storeys) – although Council can increase the height limit, at their discretion.
- R3Z – 9m (3 storeys) – although Council can reduce this further at their discretion.

Restrictions on Residential Densities

In the 'Limited Change Zone' (R3Z) it is proposed to allow Council's to set minimum subdivision area sizes and to specify the maximum number of dwellings that be constructed on one lot.

Re-establishment of third party appeal rights

Under the current Residential 2 Zone development applications are exempt from third party notice and review rights (i.e. exempt from advertising and VCAT appeals by objectors). However, in the 'Substantial Change Zone' (the new R2Z) it is proposed to re-establish these third party rights.

It seems incongruous that the State Government would on one hand seek to increase densities in existing residential areas and on the other would propose mandatory height controls across metropolitan Melbourne, propose restrictions on residential densities and re-establish the appeal rights of objectors in the zones where they are specifically seeking to encourage development. All of these changes have the potential to significantly constrain the development potential of residential land.

If you are a developer, architect or consultant involved in the redevelopment of residential land we would encourage you to make submissions to these new residential zones. Ratio will be making it's own submission to protect the interests of our broader customer base.

Any submissions in respect of these new zones must be received by **the Department of Planning and Community Development** by **Thursday 9 April 2009**. If you would like more information or if you would like Ratio to make a submission on your behalf please **don't hesitate to contact us**.

eddington report

In March 2008, Sir Rod Eddington presented his report on the East-West Link Needs Assessment to the Brumby Government. This report was commissioned in response to the Victorian Government's Meeting our Transport Challenges plan. It was to be an independent investigation on the best options for improving Melbourne's east-west transport connections.

Ratio Consultants was engaged by a group of seven eastern sector Councils including: Melbourne, Manningham, Banyule, Yarra, Boroondara, Knox and Whitehorse, to respond to the proposals set out in the report. In response to the significant proposals in the Eddington report, the key outcomes of this submission to the Government were:

- Support for the new rail link between Caulfield and Footscray
- Support for the new rail connection between Werribee and Sunshine

- Provisional support for the road link between the Eastern Freeway and the western suburbs

Of concern to these councils was the omission of any rail improvements or substantial infrastructure in the east, particularly rail access to Doncaster. Subsequently, the Eddington Report was the catalyst for the Victorian Transport Plan which was released in December 2008.

At a Community Cabinet following the release of the Eddington Report, the Victorian Premier, John Brumby requested that the group of Councils that form the Eastern Transport Coalition provide feedback on short-term public transport projects, including walking and cycling projects that could be included in the "Victorian Transport Plan". Ratio was engaged to undertake this task and a list of short to medium term projects was presented to the Premier in September 2008.

sincere condolences



Like many others, Ratio Consultants and its staff are shocked about the devastation and loss of life as a result of the Victorian bushfires. Ratio has made a generous donation to the Victorian Bushfire appeal and has also joined the Planning Institute Australia's register to assist 'pro-bono' when the inevitable rebuilding process begins.

Donations to the Victorian Bushfire appeal can be made through the Red Cross on <https://www.redcross.org.au/Donations/onlineDonations.asp>

quirky fact

"It takes about 63,000 trees to make the newsprint for the average Sunday edition of The New York Times".

Source: <http://www.amusingfacts.com/>