

# Plan evokes hate

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

A Greater Dandenong councillor says she's received "hate messages" after a proposed Sandown Racecourse redevelopment cleared the first steps for rezoning.

The council recently approved kick-starting the rezoning process that would potentially turn the 112-hectare horse and motor-racing venue into a 16,000 resident estate.

Dubbed the Sandown Racecourse Urban Renewal Project, it would allow buildings up to 12 storeys in its 'town centre' and up to six storeys in other parts.

It would include a mix of apartment towers, townhouses, offices, dining and retail.

At a 28 March meeting, Cr Rhonda Garad said this was the "opportunity, once it is exhibited, for the community to examine these plans and have their say"

"We hope that the community takes up that opportunity."

Since that statement, she says her Facebook page has been hit by "vile" messages.

She says the council's actions were "misconstrued" as "supporting" the proposal from the site owner Melbourne Racing Club.

"Most of us (councillors) feel it's too dense, too much impact on infrastructure but that the Planning Minister can just step in.

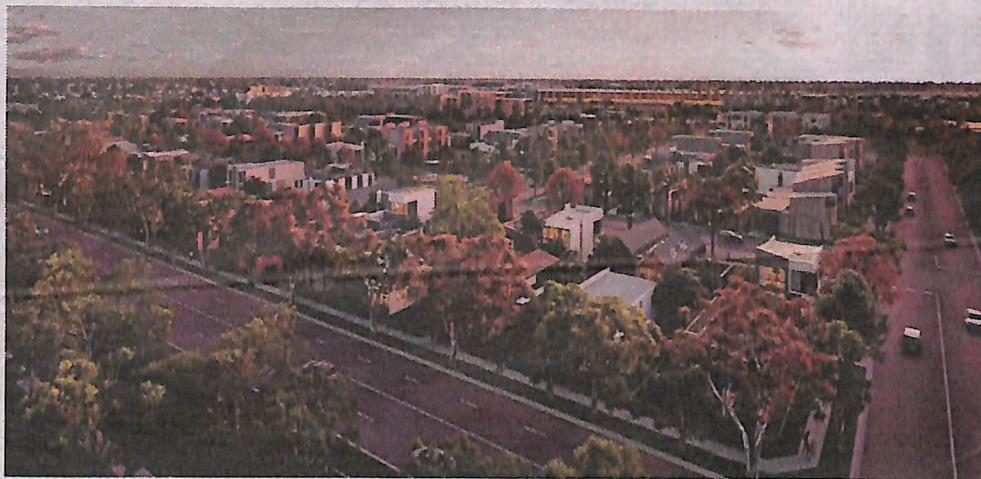
"If we voted it down, it would be extremely unlikely that the Planning Minister will not OK it.

"I think this is going to be a horrendous thing all the way through.

"What's concerning for me is the density. (MRC) is using this to finance the Caulfield site - which is more luxurious and a less dense development."

The council is requesting Planning Minister Richard Wynne to exhibit the proposed rezoning and allow for public submissions.

After public submissions, the council will



Concept drawing of Sandown estate's frontage east from Corrigan Road.

decide whether to proceed with the Planning Scheme Amendment C229.

Mayor Jim Memeti said that councillors wanted to "hear the feedback from the community".

"This is not an approval. We just want to hear from people that use the streets and how it will affect their lives.

"There's people who are upset about it. And there's other people thinking it's an opportunity to buy a new home.

"I'm hearing more negative than positive (feedback).

Meanwhile, nearly half of the 15 per cent proposed public open space will be encumbered by Mile Creek, city planning director Jody Bosman confirmed.

About 7.9 per cent of the site will be unencumbered, while 7.1 per cent will be aligned with Mile Creek and its banks.

"Land shown as encumbered does not necessarily mean that it is unusable," Mr Bosman said.

"It could be that its uses are restricted to passive recreational use instead of active recreational use.

"Also, it is further noted that should the proposed amendment gain ministerial authorisation and goes on public exhibition, matters such as the amount of open space to be provided will be available for public review and comment."

A Melbourne Racing Club spokesperson recently said the MRC and Racing Victoria would consult with industry participants, MRC members, the local community and other stakeholders.

"No decision on Sandown's future will be made until after an extensive consultation process has been undertaken.

"Any future decision that may be undertaken by MRC and (Racing Victoria) in relation to Sandown will be done in the best interests of the broader racing industry, MRC members and the local community."