

Fletcher recommendations:

Jones



THE WARRNAMBOOL PLANNING AND HERITAGE GROUP:

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] R
[/dropcap] ecommendations to council:

i) Council and Heritage Victoria to conduct a survey of the Fletcher Jones site in Warrnambool to consider the current condition and integrity of its state heritage listed aspects. The survey should re-examine what remains of the most significant aspects of the site to the local community and to the state. We would like to see Heritage Victoria and Council take a proactive role with the owner (present or future) to find a solution for renewal of this site and a way to share the stories attached to this site. Examples of best practice and processes for renewal of similar sites could be used to inspire recommendations for options and incentives to ensure

it has a viable, vibrant future.

ii). Council and Heritage Victoria to provide funds for a current structural assessment of the Fletcher Jones water tower (locally called the Silver Ball) with a view to determining a schedule of repair and maintenance works (and their cost) to ensure this state heritage listed structure is safe and viable for the next 50 years.

iii). Council and Heritage Victoria work with the Jones family to develop a social history project that tells the Fletcher Jones story and connection in Warrnambool.

The Warrnambool City Council's response (as listed 9/12/13):

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] A [/dropcap] number of buildings and features within the site are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) as significant.

Council is interested in working with the current landowner, or any future landowner, to ensure that significant elements of the site are properly protected and managed. Council is also interested in ensuring that any future redevelopment of the site involves renewal and moves away from its historical manufacturing past.

A structural assessment of the former water tower (silver ball) was undertaken in 2004. The assessment identified rectification works including replacement of hold down bolts on the south-western column, and removal of ladder and water pipe. The assessment also recommended a painting program to protect the tower from further corrosion.

In 2010, the bolts were replaced, and the water pipe and ladder were removed. It is unknown whether the painting program has been implemented.

Council officers will continue to work with the current

landowner, or any future landowner, with a view to update the 2004 structural report and identify any further matters that may need addressing.

The former Fletcher Jones factory is clearly of social significance to Warrnambool and the State of Victoria. There will many people within the community who have strong links to this site. It is becoming increasingly important that these stories are captured and shared.

Council officers will investigate funding opportunities to undertake a social history of the site (involving the Jones Family, former factory workers and members of the community). These stories will assist in the preservation of important elements of the site and in any future redevelopment of the site.

* * *

It started with two eggs: the story of Pip



By Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] T
[/dropcap]o some people, the destiny of a sand plover sitting on a nest probably doesn't mean all that much, but *Bluestone* supporters are different to most people.

We know this because of how they – perhaps including you – responded to our efforts to protect one small plover that had made the decision to nest in dry sand about 150 metres from the Hopkins River bridge, right where fishermen, walkers and plenty of energetic, beach-excited dogs like to roam.

In fact I was roaming when my big clodhopper shoe nearly wiped out the two speckled eggs that were so well camouflaged as to be almost invisible. (Mama bird was nowhere to be seen at the time: she had probably popped to the shops).

Thinking the eggs were abandoned, I admired them and moved on.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] T
[/dropcap]he next day, however, I was roaming again (I do that a lot, in the mornings) and Mama bird was draped over the eggs like a woman wearing a feathery ball gown: and so the quest to protect “Pip” and her eggs began.

We thought this would involve no more than a visit to Parks Victoria who would be able to protect the nest by roping off the area and banging a few signs into the sand, just as we had seen at other coastal nesting sites around Victoria.

But unfortunately Pip’s GPS was off.

If she had nested on the actual foreshore, another 750 metres away, she would have been in the domain of Parks Victoria. Instead, she was in a sort of no-birds-land that, upon investigation, was found to be managed by the local council.

The council, unfortunately, was up to its neck with other things – things obviously much bigger than Pip – and was unable to respond with the haste that we had hoped.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] W
[/dropcap]hile we waited for the cavalry to arrive, we made our own signs – from whatever we could find – and rigged up a very non-convincing fence using bits of old rope.

Days ticked by, during which *Bluestone* began to post “Pip” updates on its [Facebook](#) page and hundreds of people began to follow our progress, or lack thereof.

As the days turned into more than a week, we checked our fence and our signs and were constantly amazed that, despite some horrendous weather, both continued to hold.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] W
[/dropcap] were also constantly amazed by how many of our readers wanted to know how Pip was faring – she was fast turning into a minor celebrity (although without an agent).

Last Wednesday – 13 days after Pip’s nest was first discovered – the council was finally able to stake out her nesting zone with string and wooden posts, and erect two serious-looking signs.

We have no doubt that the [Bluestone FB page](#) helped that to happen and just in time, as on Sunday (yesterday) the river was packed with people and dogs enjoying the first day of Summer.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"]S[/dropcap]omething else happened over the weekend too.

Our first Pip-ette.

The second, we have no doubt, is not far behind and both Pip and her partner (Pat?) are sharing the nesting and chick-watching responsibilities.

Thankyou Bluestone supporters – we have made a small but important difference.



The 'Bluestone baby' – between Mum and Dad – shortly after hatching at the weekend.

[box] Unlike many young birds, sand plovers are self-sufficient from the moment they leave the egg. They are not fed directly by their parents, but collect their own food (under the protective eye of Mum or Dad) and spend most of their time hiding in the sand dunes until they are old enough to borrow the car keys.[/box]

Do you enjoy Bluestone? Please [subscribe](#) so we can continue to grow.



If you enjoyed this story, you might enjoy...

[A little less conversation, a little more action](#)

[Windy? Let's make the most of it!](#)

A little less conversation, a little more action



How to improve the CBD: offer financial incentives for property owners to paint the glorious shop tops along Timor St.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] W
[/dropcap]hat is this inertia that appears to be holding Warrnambool in an iron-like grip and preventing this beautiful city from reaching its full potential?

It was with a heavy heart that I read respected lawyer **Roy**

Reekie's recent letter to the local paper, lamenting that he had returned to Warrnambool after five years to find the Warrnambool City Council locked in a petty, schoolyard stand-off and he pondered if he had made a mistake in coming home.

A mistake! What an indictment: intelligent, energetic people like Roy should feel delighted to be back, not disappointed.



How to improve the CBD: paint a mural on the hideous Koroit St toilet block and, later, close it down. Relocate the bus transit to the old Post Office area.

I don't regret coming home after more than 20 years, but I, too, have been astounded by how the city appears to have lost its way. There is endless talk – usually accompanied by endless reports – about what could and should be done to revive the CBD, but there is no over-arching vision or leadership to actually make it happen.

Instead, our new-old Mayor wants us to be excited by new housing developments – projects that extend out into the country and make it even more critical to retain a vibrant city centre, or we will end up like the 'doughnut' regional

cities of the US, where everybody lives in the 'burbs and shops in malls and the city heart is left for dead.

It is my fear that Warrnambool is at a critical juncture where, unless it gets its act together, we are at risk of that happening. We will have a city centre full of "services", but no heart.



How to improve the CBD: offer up high-profile but ugly walls, like this eyesore, to public art.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] I [dropcap] recently lived near a city like that: Morwell, in Gippsland. It was once a vibrant 'SEC town', but once the power companies were privatised, the jobs went and so did the families who shopped, ate and socialised in the town. It now relies on being a "service" centre, full of bland state and federal government offices providing health, welfare and social support services.

Morwell's main street is full of empty, dusty shops that were

once restaurants, clothing stores, jewellers, butchers, bakers and newsagencies, some of which have moved out to the MidValley Shopping Centre – halfway between Morwell and Traralgon – because that's where people now linger. Does this sound familiar?

Warrnambool, however, has a huge advantage over a place like Morwell and that is tourism. People flock to see the whales, and the beaches, and even good old Flagstaff Hill, but the CBD is letting us down, badly.

We have some of the most gorgeous and historic buildings in Victoria, but you wouldn't know it. We have an incredible, vibrant arts scene, but – judging by the lack of public art – you wouldn't know it. We have a deep and important indigenous history right around this area, but you wouldn't know it.

I walked around the entire CBD last week and did not see one bit of indigenous public art and only a handful of public art. Perhaps I was looking in the wrong places.



How to improve the CBD: stop patching and start

paving. Especially on high-profile corners like this one.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] W
[/dropcap]hat I did see were many empty, dusty shops; dirty and stained bitumen pavements that had been patched and repatched to the point of being unsafe; a dark toilet block and a noisy bus transit zone dominating the hub of Liebig and Koroit streets; and, as always, pedestrians trying to skip between cars at intersections and being grateful when somebody stopped to let them pass.

And it appears that when some people DO try and make a difference, they are blocked at every turn. Take, for example, the artist who tried to open a pop-up market in an empty shop but was unable to find anyone (among the 20 or so people who apparently, between them, own the CBD) who would take it on. They would rather leave their shop empty. (What a contrast to [Revive Newcastle](#), where property owners actively encourage such ideas.)

And so the inertia continues...and more reports are written (*another* Liebig St revival plan is next) and older reports gather dust (remember the 2010 report on revitalising the Warrnambool Railway Station precinct?) and everybody sighs and says, "that's just how it is here", while cities and towns like Bendigo, Castlemaine, Daylesford, Ballarat, Kyneton and even Birregurra, power ahead.

We deserve better leadership and this is Mayor Neoh's greatest challenge: to unite the council and business community around a common purpose and to actually **get things done**.



How to improve the CBD: free (timed) parking, bike lanes and a 40 kph speed limit between Lava and Timor Streets.



What CAN be done: for more examples

of creative street art click [here](#).

[learn_more caption="Ten ideas to improve the CBD, in some cases, almost instantly – click the arrow"]

1. All outdoor eating in Liebig St must use quality furniture – not cheap, plastic tables and chairs.
2. Paint a mural on the ugliest toilet block known to feature on a major intersection anywhere in Victoria...until you can close it down.
3. Relocate the bus transit area from Koroit St to outside the former Post Office Building in Timor St.
4. Provide financial support for all of the historic shop tops along Timor St to be repainted.
5. Repave all of the footpaths along Liebig St.
6. Free parking in the entire CBD, but with time restrictions enforced by local laws.
7. At least half a dozen bare and ugly walls around the CBD to be offered up for public art.
8. Ban all exposed skip bins.
9. Add bike lanes along Liebig St and reduce traffic speeds to 40 kph between Lava and Timor streets.
10. Cars entering roundabouts must give way to pedestrians.

Do you have anything to add?

[/learn_more]



Find other opinion pieces here:

[Sister Cities or business brothers?](#)

[When scrutiny is sub-standard, democracy suffers](#)

[Windy? Let's make the most of it!](#)

Sister cities or business brothers?



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] A
[/dropcap]mid all the [arguing](#) about whether Warrnambool City Council should send a delegation to Miura, Japan, for Sister City celebrations, a simple question is yet to be answered: what do we gain from our two Sister City connections?

And, more importantly, what do we expect?

Trying to answer the first question is harder than you think, as there is no single, easily accessible reporting mechanism that documents the achievements of the Miura link that dates back more than 20 years (our Sister City link with Changchun, China, began last year).

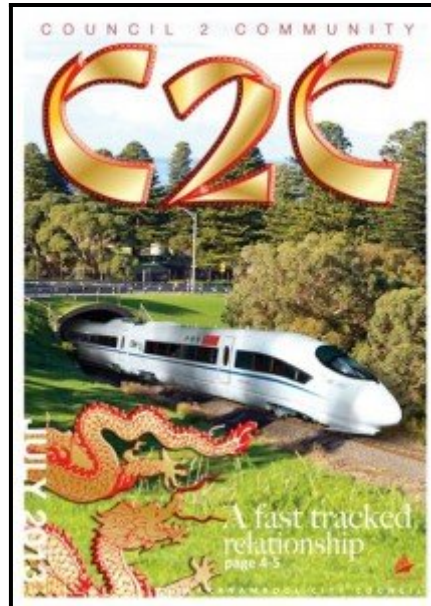
Instead, you have to trawl through two decades of council minutes and newspaper archives to discover that our Sister City relationship with Miura has pretty much done what it set out to do, which was to build “friendship, cooperation and understanding” between two very different cultures.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] I
[/dropcap]n a pre-Internet world, it was considered money well spent to invest ratepayer dollars in building harmonious relationships with cultures so unlike our own as to be exotic. School kids have a chance to visit another country, and to host international students in return. We have a lovely, if hidden, Japanese friendship garden, and Miura has some Norfolk pine seedlings. Funds have been used to host and attend civic functions, both here and in Miura.

That’s what a Sister City relationship used to be about and what ratepayers’ money has been spent on, although whether – in the wired, highly mobile world of 2013 – it is still money well spent, is open to debate.

Which brings us to the second question: what do we expect?

This is where things have shifted.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] T
[/dropcap]he July edition of the Council’s newsletter, [C2C](#), was almost breathless in its description of our newest Sister City, Changchun, as a place of 7.5 million people, spread across 20,571sq/km, and pumping out 2.8 million and 2500 train carriages a year. Who wouldn’t want a piece of that action?

Indeed, the newsletter cover gave a tantalising taste of what we might look forward to, with a mock image of a Chinese bullet train speeding into Warrnambool railway station. Wow, this would be so much better than the current V-Line service that is one of the [poorest performing in the state](#) because of its breakdowns and delays.

This new Sister City relationship is not only about friendship and goodwill, but promoting “common prosperity and development” – in other words, business – and this takes a lot of time, and we can expect, a lot more money before we see any concrete results.

The council minutes of September 9 make this clear:

“If the Council and the Great South Coast elect to use the relationship with Changchun to leverage business

opportunities, further costs will accrue in hosting visits to Warrnambool from Changchun and staff resources in preparing and supporting business and projects to the benefit of the region, matching funding with state government grants etc. These are unknown at this stage.”



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] W [/dropcap]hile we might be flattered by the intentions of a major city, we certainly don't have Changchun all to ourselves. Changchun has 19 other Sister Cities: Warrnambool is number 20. In this regard, it is a bit like being married to a polygamist – you have a seat at the table, but the love is being shared around.

Still, the [recent business delegation to Changchun](#), led by Mayor Michael Neoh and CEO Bruce Anson, reported that they found the trip invaluable as an entrée to potential new markets.

No doubt their efforts to build on this introduction will dovetail with the work of the Great South Coast Exporters Group, and similar state and federal bodies that work to build international trade relations.

But is this what our Sister City relationships should be about?

And should ratepayers' money be directed to this purpose, or could it be better used to fund, for example, more tangible and immediate projects such as improving the restaurant end of Liebig St, installing more public art, or buying more books for the library?

The little sister has grown up: now is the time for an open discussion on where she fits into the family.



If you enjoyed this, you might enjoy...

[When scrutiny is sub-standard, democracy suffers](#)