

# Fawkner residents under siege from speeding & hooning – lack of planning vision to blame

A recent survey of Fawkner Residents Association (FRA) members revealed an alarming number of speeding, hooning and general anti-social behaviour throughout the suburb's streets, sporting facility carparks and the surrounding open space / parklands said the group's spokesperson Mr Joe Perri.

I was quite surprised and alarmed by the extent of the problem members of our group reported in response to the online article affirmed Joe Perri. "In fact, as the number increased it began to resemble a community under siege from speeding, rat runs and burnouts in quiet suburban streets and carparks – to noisy motorbikes, dirt bikes and quads on roads and in parks, damaging the environment, property, behaving badly and causing alarm to residents".

Though it would be very easy to blame frustrated impatient anti-social motorists or bored teenagers. The truth is the problem is far deeper and exposes the absence of an urban planning vision for the suburb and municipality as a whole said Joe Perri.

"Moreland, like most councils 'default response' to an issue such as this is traffic surveys, speed humps, roundabouts or radars that display a smiley face to drivers adhering to the roadway's speed limit – or to call for more police patrols.

"In the majority of cases, these responses are nothing more than temporary or quick fix band aid solutions for deeper structural socio problems that are only going to intensify in the future".

Moreland City Council forecasts Fawkner's population of 13,171 in 2011 will increase by 3,300 or 25% to 16,481 by 2036. However, this forecast does not include an urban planning vision or overlay for the suburb to ensure that vitally important public realm, retail, parks, social, environmental and sporting facilities increase proportionately to accommodate the needs of the suburb's population.

"Therein is the underlying problem and I believe is the major contributing cause to the current (and future) socio problems that will impact the residents of Fawkner", said Joe Perri.

Take for example Fawkner's youth. They are locked out of the suburb's main sporting parks of CB Smith Reserve and Mutton Reserve that are surrounded by steel fences.

So is it any wonder that with nowhere to go, pent-up youthful energy is expended dangerously in speeding on the roads, doing burn-outs in carparks or damaging the parks and open spaces adjacent to the Merri Creek.

Joe Perri continued, "Unfortunately the state government views municipalities like Moreland and suburbs such as Fawkner as nothing more than buckets of money into which high density development is inserted in order to extract taxes, stamp duty and rates.

"Very little of which comes back in infrastructure to benefit the suburbs and residents from which it was extracted".

"Furthermore, all the lessons of the past about sustainable urban planning and development in order to ensure a resilient society have been jettisoned".

"With no plans to ensure environmental, economic and social sustainability of Moreland suburbs like Fawkner, the future for the municipality will be measured in increased anti-social dangerous behaviour, disconnected communities, declining quality of life, segregation, poor physical health, heightened mental illness, crime, violence and loneliness".

There is a solution and that is to have a documented urban plan. Moreland Council cannot continue ignoring the very real need for action now concluded Joe Perri.

ENDS

Issued by the Fawkner Residents Association

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