

Year of housing access inequality for seniors & disabled ends – and another about to start says Residents Assoc

One of the most worrying aspects of Spring Street's obsession with development at all costs is the unintended consequence of social inequality and access to suitable housing for seniors, mobility challenged and families coping with parents and children with disabilities said Fawkner Residents Association spokesperson Mr Joe Perri.

Commenting further Joe Perri said, "Developments are coming onto the market in Fawkner in designated high-density zones and not one meets the Liveable Housing Design gold and platinum level guidelines. As a result, seniors and the mobility challenged are being deprived of access to housing suitable for their needs in areas that are close to shopping, medical, transport and other amenities".

"By far the worst example is Jukes Road and more recently Hood Crescent".

27 new dwellings over seven sites in Jukes Road have been approved and not one meets the gold and platinum level guidelines.

Seniors and the mobility challenged would appreciate and benefit from a home on Jukes Road with access to the nearby Bonwick Street retail precinct, library, community centre, swimming pool and CB Smith Reserve sporting complex. Instead developers are ignoring the needs of these people in their planning.

It's almost like the developers have banded together and constructed a large sign declaring Jukes Road as a seniors and disabled free zone said an infuriated Joe Perri.

There is currently an application before Moreland Council for 8 townhouses to be constructed on Hood Crescent bringing the total to 18 with the adjacent development that was approved by VCAT earlier this year.

Seniors and the mobility challenged would benefit immensely from access to the Merri Creek parkland that surrounds the quiet East Fawkner residential enclave, however they again find themselves with nothing on offer to suit their needs from developers.

"If all this wasn't bad enough, it's the lost opportunity and unrealised potential that I regard as the most disturbing", said Joe Perri.

"Fawkner has a quite a number of elderly residents living lonely lives in homes that are beyond their means to maintain physically and financially. However, they can't consider down-sizing as developers are deliberately not providing housing to accommodate their specific needs.

"So instead of a win-win scenario providing an incentive to downsize that in turn would result in more properties coming to market to address the inner-city housing shortage – we have a missed opportunity and an appalling example of greed embodied in uncaring, unsustainable housing projects that deliberately excludes seniors, disabled and the mobility challenged".

Adding his voice, Mr Gino Iannazzo of Australian Pensioners' Voice said, "I'm not surprised that elderly residents have been overlooked in yet another example of profits before people".

"Instead of access to housing options that would provide peace of mind and quality of living in their twilight years – they have nothing. Is it any wonder seniors feel abandoned by government"?

Moreland City Council and Spring Street must join forces to address this situation with decisive action in 2020 affirmed Joe Perri.

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