

### 6.3 BLUESTONE WITHIN THE OAKLEIGH ACTIVITY CENTRE PRECINCT

Submitting Councillor: Cr James

**MOTION**

*That Council:*

- 1. Continues to retain the historic character of the Oakleigh Activity Centre precinct by reusing historic materials such as bluestone where practical.*
- 2. Uses bluestone as a feature in the borders around the plane trees garden beds in the next stage of the Atherton Road reconstruction.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Council is currently in the final stages of planning for the second stage of the reconstruction for Atherton Road from Clyde Street to Warrigal Road. A number of residents have raised concerns about the loss of bluestone paving in the area including the loss of the bluestone planter boxes around the plane trees due to its historical context of the bluestone within and around the Oakleigh Activity Centre.

**DISCUSSION**

Bluestone has become synonymous with cultural heritage in Melbourne and Victoria. It is prominent amongst many of the inner city suburbs with its most prevalent use in public infrastructure is in laneways and street gutters. Many of the surrounding streets around the Oakleigh Activity Centre have bluestone gutters; Drummond Street, Palmerston Grove, Oxford Street, Regent Street, Westminster Street and Atkinson Street have all been reconstructed in the past 20 years using bluestone guttering to name a few.

Residents have contacted me to express their concern at the removal of the bluestone gutters in the Atherton Road shopping precinct, which started several years ago as part of maintenance works. However, when I researched further it became evident that the bluestone gutters were removed many years earlier and the only remaining bluestone in Atherton Road since that time has been around the base of the plane trees that line the street. The planter boxes were installed in the 1980s when the plane trees were planted.

Land was first sold in Oakleigh more than 160 years ago. I believe that it is incumbent on Council to respect the historical significance that bluestone has played in the life of the city. The design of the Atherton Road reconstruction has large garden areas under the trees to allow the infiltration of water to the tree root zone and formal borders around the base of the existing trees. Altering these borders to be constructed with bluestone, which is close in colour to the pavers to be installed, is an easy way to maintain the historical significance of bluestone without dramatically impacting maintenance programs for gutters and drainage.

I ask Council to support the garden bed borders around the trees being constructed with bluestone.

***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

I am informed by Council's Engineering Department that this can be done within the existing reconstruction budget and therefore there are no direct financial implications on this change.

***CONCLUSION***

I recommend to Council that gutters in the streets around the Oakleigh Activity Centre be reconstructed reusing historic bluestone where possible and that the borders of the garden beds around the plane trees along Atherton Road be constructed using bluestone.