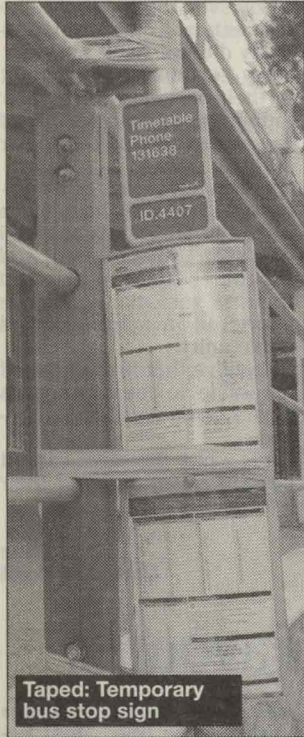


# Yarra Street bus stop drama



Taped: Temporary bus stop sign

Words and pictures by  
**SANDY BURGOYNE**

The succession of strange roadworks on Yarra Street continues — apparently to extend the bus bay into the traffic lane outside the Warrandyte Community Centre to match the bus stop on the other side of the road.

Two days after the Cup Day holiday, residents and traders were bemused to discover the bus bay in front of the Community Centre had been fenced off and workmen were enthusiastically digging it up. Trucks and machinery were parked in the bay across the frontage of the Community Centre, affecting two shop fronts and one office space — the Lions Opportunity Shop, Information Warrandyte and the *Warrandyte Diary*.

"It is not going to be good for business," opp shop manager, Liz Prewett told the *Diary*.

"People are seeing all this and they are keeping away. The stock, clothing and that, can't go out the front because

of the cement dust flying through the air.

"The noise level this morning, with the pneumatic drills and the concrete cutters was horrendous. We'd like to know what it is they are doing," she said.

A temporary bus stop for west-bound buses, which takes up most of the parking space, has been set up outside Riverésque and the former Gingko site. The bus stop sign and timetable has been taped to the fence with "bus stop" and "no parking" spray-painted on the bitumen.

The *Diary* noticed a VicRoads vehicle parked at the road works, but when we contacted their media unit for comment we were referred to the Department of Transport (DoT). We contacted DoT and asked them to respond, admittedly at short notice, but their media release did not reach the *Diary* by the time we went to press.

A Manningham council spokesman said that council

does not have any part in this joint VicRoads/DoT initiative.

"There has been regrettably only minimal consultation with council on this matter," Manningham Cr David Ellis told the *Diary*.

"From the few discussions that VicRoads and Department of Transport have had with myself and Manningham officers it appeared that any decision on the bus stop at the Community Centre was put on hold. The works currently being undertaken have come as an unwelcome surprise to Manningham council. This is not a smart way to introduce major changes to local traffic conditions."

Cr Ellis has strong reservations about the loss of another bus bay on Yarra Street.

"The State Department of Transport and VicRoads have rolled out their plan for in-line stops — that is, where the bus stops in the middle of the road — as a one-size-fits-all solution without considering local

conditions.

"In Yarra Street this has meant an expensive solution to a problem we didn't have. But it has created problems we certainly don't need. Traffic on this already congested thoroughfare is now regularly at a standstill — and there are daily risks to safety as motorists pull out to drive around the buses."

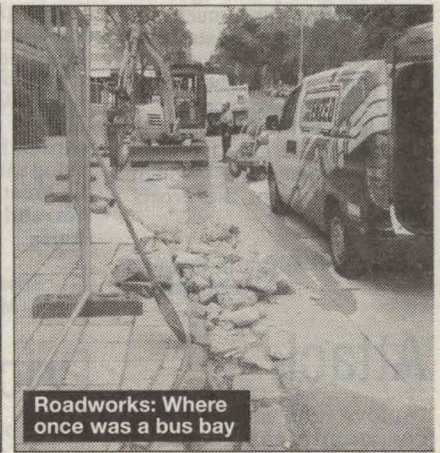
Cr Ellis, who chairs Manningham's municipal emergency planning committee, also raised concerns about emergency evacuation.

"Warrandyte's extreme vulnerability to fire has been acknowledged. In an event like Black Saturday, we need to prepare for large numbers of people leaving the area in a short space of time. With only one narrow two-lane road, and with fire and police vehicles potentially competing with hundreds of cars, we need to plan seriously for orderly and rapid evacuation. This must include planning by all relevant state authori-

ties, including in this case VicRoads and Department of Transport. Removing the bus indents seriously compounds the problem of congestion in an emergency situation," he said.

"Local MP Ryan Smith has previously been receptive to public concerns regarding a similar situation at the adjacent bus stop at Whipstick Gully, indicating he would look to use his ministerial authority to reverse (at an estimated cost of \$80,000) the changes only recently made to the indent at that location. That has yet to happen — but to be restoring one indent even while digging out another is patently absurd. Warrandyte people are entitled to ask whether our state government has any consistent plan at all for local bus services and safe traffic management in Yarra Street."

● The *Diary* will keep you up-to-date on this important matter.



Roadworks: Where once was a bus bay