

KINGSTON

Developer fees

Overhaul of council charges will take burden off ratepayers

Emma Watson

DEVELOPERS could fork out tens of thousands of dollars in Kingston Council planning application fees under an overhaul of the system.

Under new rules, they will be slugged for council officer time, legal fees and advertising costs if they want to rezone land in the growing pocket of Melbourne's south.

The council said it recently spent an estimated \$36,000 on a proposal that made it part-way through the planning scheme amendment process while the developer paid just \$2871.

Kingston planning and development general manager Jonathan Guttman said that under the new policy, the council would have recouped

\$33,000 of those costs. "Kingston Council is seeking to have the applicant, who will benefit from the rezoning, cover a fairer share of the planning scheme amendment process," Mr Guttman said.

Until now, Kingston charged developers an application fee of \$2871, some of the costs of panel hearings, which are usually about \$10,000-\$15,000 and analysing submissions which can cost up to \$38,000.

It will now be able to charge developers for advertising costs, including in the local newspaper; legal fees; peer reviews on expert reports; and everything associated with planning panel hearings. In extreme cases, developers may even need to pay for in-house resources

such as a dedicated officer to process their application.

Mr Guttman said ratepayers were currently left to fund these costs, which were increasingly taking up the council's time.

He said the fees would vary for each applicant, depending on the complexity and scale of the proposed development.

However, Danni Addison, the Urban Development Institute of Australia's Victorian chief executive, said to justify increased planning application fees, more focus was needed on making councils and the planning framework operate more effectively.

"A failure to do this will cause Victoria to fall behind all the other states in the country in terms of planning," Ms Addison said.

MENTONE



Students Rose, Karen and Charlotte show off their works. Picture: AAP/MAL FAIRCLOUGH

Myriad talents on show

GARMENTS, mini movies and artworks that showcase students' talents and skills will be on show at a Mentone school later this month.

The three-day exhibition at Kilibreda College will kick off with a fashion parade on opening night.

Teacher Camille Riordan has urged the community to come along and see what Kilibreda's creative VCE students have produced.

"The works vary dramatically in scale and modes of expression," Ms Riordan said. "We'd love to have people

from outside our school community see the students' talents."

The exhibition runs on October 19-21 and involves the work of VCE art, studio art, media, textiles, and visual communication and design students.

CLAYTON SOUTH

Second reprieve for tree hacker

Emma Watson

A MACHETE-wielding tree hacker who destroyed tens of thousands of dollars' worth of trees in several suburbs has again walked free from court.

Sam Cohen, 21, of Heather-ton, (pictured) faced the Moorabbin Magistrates' Court on October 5 for sentencing related to a tree-hacking rampage in Heather-ton, Braeside Park, Clayton South, Cheltenham and Mordialloc between August and November last year.



He had pleaded guilty earlier this year and Magistrate Timothy Gattuso had previously deferred the matter to allow Mr Cohen to comply

with an unrelated corrections order issued over an attempted armed robbery.

Defence lawyer Anna Balmer told the court on October 5 that Mr Cohen's case manager had indicated he'd significantly improved his behaviour, but she preferred sentencing to wait until another judicial monitoring hearing was held.

"He's wanting to show the court he's able to rehabilitate himself," Ms Balmer said.

Police prosecutor Sergeant Mark Thomson did not object to the adjournment.

Mr Gattuso agreed to hold off on sentencing until November 16, so he could review whether Mr Cohen continued to comply with the conditions set out on his existing corrections order.

"I'm pleased to hear you've made some changes since His Honour (at the County Court) has spoken to you," Mr Gattuso said.

"I hope your current progress continues."

Mr Gattuso encouraged Cohen to engage in programs to assist in mental health and drug and alcohol issues.

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