

In a recent letter, 'Stop the Arguing' (Nov 21st) Jack McLean refers to the current fight by the local community to retain the remaining parkland and waterways of Parkside Gardens as an 'argument' between the Council and 'a group of people'. He then suggests that the current housing estate proposal by VicUrban would be a good compromise. **The compromise has already taken place.**

It was proposed and passed by the Commissioners when they were in power, then ratified by the new incoming Councillors in 1997. The community is angry now because the present Council has ignored that compromise.

It is very important for people to understand how all this came about, as it puts into perspective the current battle for the parkland inside the waterways. In 1995 a proposal to use the entire site for housing was put forward by the Commissioners. The Community strongly rejected the proposal, as they do now. As a result, at their meeting on 15th March 1996, the Commissioners declared;

“that there was to be no housing **INSIDE** the waterways because the overwhelming support is for the area inside the waterway, at the very least, to be retained and further developed as public parkland” (page3)

However, some of the parkland outside of the waterways would be used for residential housing development. The community accepted this. It was seen as a fair compromise. As a result we have the Banks Place housing development to the west of the moat.. There were also plans for Council to develop and sell the ratepayer-owned land between Parkside Gardens and Wanganui Park Secondary School for housing, but this did not eventuate.

The minutes show that Council passed a resolution to use the proceeds from the sale of the land and future rate revenue from the housing to develop and maintain Parkside Gardens inside the waterways area.

It is not the fault of the community that Council failed to maintain and develop Parkside Gardens during the past seven years. Now our citizens are being asked to compromise again, this time agreeing to lose the most of the waterways and the undulating space within; the very features which make this park unique.

The community **has** compromised. **What is now required is a show of respect for that compromise.** Many people are ready and willing to work with Council to develop what now remains of Parkside Gardens into a park for the benefit of this community, using design elements, plantings and water-management practices relevant to the 21st Century.

Jenny Houlihan,
A Friend of Parkside Gardens.