

## RHSV Condemns Decision to Allow Demolition of Historic Jack Dyer Stand, Punt Road Oval



The City of Melbourne voted to recommend to the Minister for Planning that Richmond Football Club be allowed to demolish the historic Jack Dyer Stand on the Punt Road Oval. Labor Prime Minister Andrew Fisher opened the stand before the match between Richmond and South Melbourne on 6 June 1914. It is a rare surviving example of an Edwardian-era grandstand, the earliest surviving building on the site and largely intact. It is of great significance as the only surviving symbol of the Richmond Football Club's presence at the Punt Road Oval and as a tangible witness to the heroic period of Aussie Rules. Yet the City of Melbourne is prepared to sacrifice this landmark to Victoria's cultural history simply to save money for the Club.

The Richmond Football Club initially claimed that demolition of this historic stand was required in order to obtain space for a full oval on which its AFLW team could play. But the Club's consultants offered a viable alternative: obtaining the space by demolishing the 1984 Swinburne Centre, which is a blot on the landscape. So there was a win-win solution, in which a beautiful, historic stand would be preserved and given a new lease on life while a peculiarly egregious building would disappear, thus improving the landscape.

City of Melbourne officers initially recommended protecting the Jack Dyer Stand and demolishing the Swinburne Centre. [-There](#) were [then](#) secret discussions with the Club which led to the officers' changing their minds or being overruled. As a result, Councillors voted unanimously for demolition, even those Councillors who profess concern for heritage.

The arguments about costs, structural deficiencies, and non-compliance issues which, it is claimed, were in the secret materials kept from the public are commonly invoked to destroy heritage buildings. The costs of rectification are invariably inflated -and the costs of building the new are invariably minimised. In this case, there is no reason to suppose that there was any irremediable problem posed.

A landmark is now doomed even though a solution was available. A piece of the soul of Melbourne will be lost forever.

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21 June 2022