

# New warning over creek land's future

Another conservation group has intervened in the dispute over the future of open space land lining a part of the Blackburn Creek in the "Bellbird" area.

The Nunawading gardening education advisory committee told the last meeting of Nunawading Council that alarm over the issue was increasing.

The committee, a voluntary group which advises the council on gardening and environmental matters, warned that any development on the land concerned would have an impact detrimental to the landscape.

A public meeting to discuss all aspects of the issue has been called tonight at 8 p.m. at Wesley hall, The Avenue, Blackburn, by another interested group — the Blackburn Creek conservation group.

The gardening education advisory committee also warned the council that the area's immense value as public open space for walks and enjoyment of natural surroundings would be harmed if new development was permitted.

Controversy over the future of the land erupted in April when present owners of the land, the Board of Works, revealed that it wanted to dispose of its holding — no longer required for drainage or other purposes.

## Portion

The land borders Blackburn Creek, a tributary of Gardiner's Creek, between Pakenham and Main St.

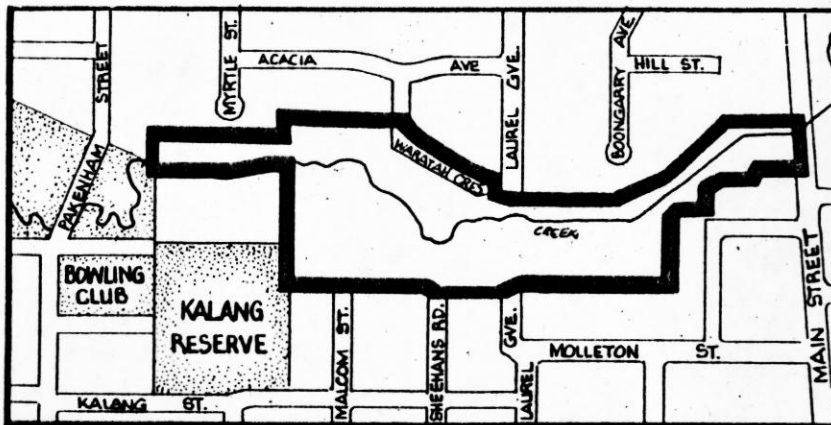
Nunawading Council does not want and has not got the money to acquire any more of the land than a small portion it has

bought to extend Kalang Reserve northward.

Nearby residents fear that a housing subdivision or bridge-building to link the two sections of Laurel Grove could destroy the area's bushland environment, disturb the birdlife and wreck flora.

The board has announced that it will now have to examine what might be suitable uses for the area.

The council has since asked the State Government that any re-zoning proposed be put through the full town planning exhibition and objection procedures.



● The Board-owned land at the centre of the Bellbird area dispute is outlined in black. Nunawading Council is buying only the area to the north of Kalang Reserve to extend that reserve.

## Crowd takes over meeting

About 40 Blackburn bellbird area residents invaded Nunawading Progress Association's meeting last week following rumors of a threat to bushland near their homes.

Residents living close to Gardiner's Creek between Main and Pakenham Sts. had heard reports that the Board of Works intended to sell much of the land it owned close to the creek.

Other rumors that a new arterial road might be built through the creek reserve added to the stir.

A big deputation to seek information on the rumors and to discuss action on the issue was assembled to attend the association's regular public meeting at Nunawading civic centre last Wednesday night.

The "invasion" took progress association officers and the audience by surprise because the issue had not previously

been aired or its details known.

Progress Association president Mr Jim Clowes suspended the meeting to enable the Gardiner's Creek problem to be outlined.

He suggested that the Blackburn residents form a committee of five to investigate and act. They did so later in the night.

Inquiries by the Gazette later established that the "problem" land alongside the Gardiner's Creek was the area which the Board of Works no longer has use

for and which Nunawading Council has declined to acquire.

## Dropped

A Board of Works official told the Gazette that there was no proposal whatever for a new road to be built through the area.

He said a tentative zoning for an arterial road through the area had been dropped several years ago.

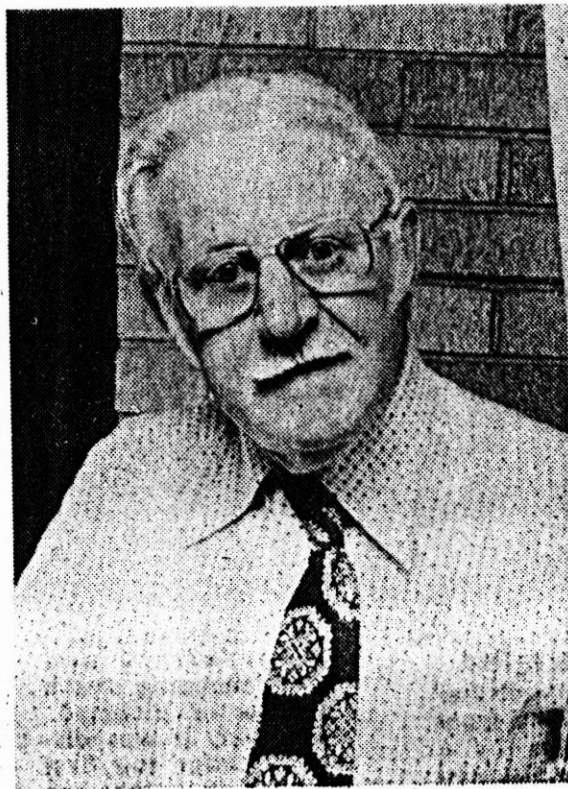
The Board, he said, now needed to examine how it could dispose of its surplus unwanted land along the creek reserve since Nunawading Council had declined acquisition offer.

(The council has bought only that section of the board land lying directly north of Kalang Reserve in order to extend that parkland. The council has declined to buy the other creekside land offered because of lack of funds and the heavy additional maintenance cost it would involve.)

Some of the Blackburn residents at last week's meeting claimed that a council purchase of all the offered land for public open space would solve their problems.

Mr Clowes warned them, however, that Nunawading Council's existing open space purchasing program was already committed for nearly \$2 million throughout the municipality and additional purchases would bring a further crushing financial burden for ratepayers and the council.

● Rezoning possible says board: council's view, see Page 9.



● Progress Association president Mr Jim Clowes — chaired the "invaded" meeting.