



Supercars' culture: noise, aggression and testosterone mixed with high-octane speed.

Bad hoon rising*

The Newcastle East Residents Group has a long history of lobbying for traffic calming measures in the East End precinct. Many years of meetings with Police, Council and traffic authorities saw the incidents of 'hooning' behaviour in our streets decrease. Newcastle East became a pedestrianised, family-friendly suburb some 15 years ago.

With the announcement of the race last September, came a resurgence of car 'hoon' behaviour. Some drivers saw the NCC approval of a race-track through residential streets as an endorsement of anti-social driving. Many play a cat-and-mouse game with police almost every night of the week. Evidence of their night antics can already be seen in the skid marks on the new circuit.

In the Newcastle Herald story 'Newcastle 500 Supercars Track No Place For Hoons' (12/10/17) Kurt Sakzawski (Supercars) played down the problem and Supercars' role in causing it by saying: "The police can make sure they have a regular presence, and that usually keeps them pretty honest." He went on to ex-

plain that now the police know where the hoons are likely to be they can "be there in a second".

Not right, Kurt. The police have finite resources. They are not specifically employed to regulate a social problem created by Supercars in public spaces.

Is this what Mr. Warburton refers to as a "permanent legacy for decades to come"?

Perhaps a better legacy would be for Supercars to use some of the money they will take from Newcastle to fund an extra police patrol car, or install permanent CCTV cameras.

Like Bathurst the Newcastle 500 Supercars track will be a magnet for drivers who want to feel the thrill of racing all year round. Unlike Bathurst the Newcastle track exploits residential streets.

To report negligent driving and anti-social activity ring 131 444. Calls to this number are automatically logged and recorded in the system.

* Apologies to Chesedee Clearwater. Their song Bad Moon Rising was based on the idea of a character who is down on his luck, then meets the Devil and sells his soul to him. It isn't hard to see analogies between that theme and this event!

Rats deserting a sinking ship?



Going ... CEO James Warburton
Going ... Managing Director Matt Braid
Going ... Pitlane reporter Greg Rust
Going ... Media Boss - Simon Fordham

Community Team, Newcastle 500

Gone Jayne Manwarring
Gone Murray Hodges

Last man standing is anybody's guess!
Corporate entities such as Supercars appear to have a revolving-door policy.



Unlike some progressive councils, NCC's policy is 'top-up-and-down' and make the city a heat sink!

Green is cool

If only we had a council like Darebin in Victoria. They have the opposite strategy to NCC ... here is an excerpt from Darebin's Greenstreets Streetscape Strategy:

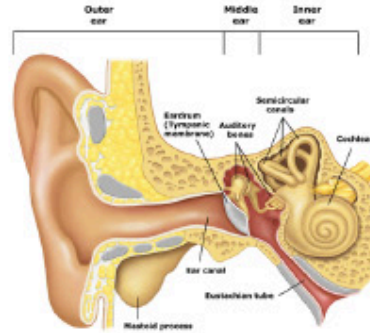
When designing a streetscape, priority will be placed on maximising opportunities to return paved or hard surfaces to permeable, green space. This will mean widening nature strips, removing hard paving, creating kerb outstands and utilizing creative alternative methods of planting to increase the amount of planting area in streets.

In some cases a minimal amount of car parking may be removed to facilitate streetscape design improvements.

<http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au>

And in Darwin, the NT Property Council has signs around the city extolling the virtues of street planting! The project is called "Cooling and Revitalising Darwin City" and aims to identify the change needed for Darwin to become more liveable, walkable and desirable while people go about their daily activities.

There are several pop-up shade areas, made from recycled pallets with advanced potted trees, timber benches for seating and tables, solar-powered fans for ventilation, grassed areas and a shade canopy.



What's all the noise about?*

Have you ever walked into a room with a television on and told the kids or your partner, "Can you turn down the sound, it's so loud!" They look at you strangely as they reach for the remote to lower the volume control.

So what is going on? Before we answer this question we need to understand how your ears work. Your ear is a sensitive detector of sound pressure in the air. It is a marvellous creation and not even

the best cochlear implants of today can match the ear's specifications.

Sound is a packet of pressure waves that enter your outer ear and are channelled towards your eardrum. The eardrum vibrates and sends the sound waves to your middle ear which comprises three bones: the hammer, the anvil and the stirrup. These bones amplify the vibrations through the action of levers, and without them we would hear only about one thousandth of the sound energy and be effectively deaf. Finally, these mechanically amplified sounds are sent into the fluid-filled cochlea which has almost 20 000 hair cells that send nerve impulses to our brain. These impulses are interpreted as the sound of your child, the music of your favourite band, the bark of a dog, or the blaring of a car's horn, etc.

Your ears are wonderful but they need some care. Loud noises and age are the enemy. Over time, and with exposure to noise, our ears lose effectiveness. For many this change is gradual and not noticed until old age. A simple hearing test can give an indication of the health of your ears.

Sudden or prolonged noise exposure can produce noise-induced hearing loss. High level impulsive noise such as gunshots, firecrackers, motor racing vehicles and explosions can cause immediate



Wanton heritage vandalism in Nobbys Road

Damaging our heritage heart

Historic homes on Nobbys Road, Scott Street and Watt Street have cracking and other damage as a direct result of the works undertaken by Supercars. Despite many requests, organisers have refused to identify who is insuring Supercars, and have refused to allow residents to see the insurance documents.

The Risk Assessment in the Civil Works documents relating to roadworks along the race circuit, identified damage to heritage as a likely risk. Instead of taking measures to mitigate these risks, Supercars and NCC ploughed on with work schedules regardless. They prioritised the race at all costs over heritage value.

These quotes from several affected residents tell part of the story:

"The contractors have shown little regard for the fragile nature of our buildings, given the extent of the damage."

"Our building has moved as a result of the road work and I have recorded internal cracking to cornices and skirting boards in my apartment."

"A drop in a section of my flooring suggests to me that significant structural damage has occurred and needs to be inspected."

The primary cause of the vibration damage to homes appears to be compactors and diggers operating within a few metres of buildings. Damage could have been avoided if these projects were properly scoped and appropriate vibration monitoring undertaken (a condition of consent that was not enforced).

"Every day now I look around our 120 year old heritage listed home and see more cracks; cracks in the cornices, cracks in the skirting boards, cracks around the window frames, cracks down the stair wells, and now our floorboards are moving and buckling. We have contacted council, Supercars, parliamentary representatives and the Environmental Protection Authority NSW (which includes Heritage protection).

hearing loss when levels are near or exceed 140 dBC. Such noise levels can result in pain which may be an indication of damage to the eardrum or the middle ear bones.

Noise exposure to higher-than-normal sound levels for prolonged periods can damage the hair cells in your cochlea. Once damaged, unlike other cells in your body, they are not replaced. Damage enough of them and you will have some hearing loss.

Back to the television with the volume setting on loud. If someone else thinks the sound level is too loud, it probably is and your ears have simply become used to it. Just because you don't perceive the sound as loud, doesn't mean that your hearing is not being affected. The simplest way to minimise the potential for any long-term hearing damage is to lower the sound volume and/or remove yourself from the loud sound. And always wear hearing protection in any noisy environment.

* We recommend you go to your doctor or an audiologist for professional advice if you have any concerns about your hearing and the potential impact of the Newcastle 500 motor racing event.

www.riddoc.nth.gov.au/health/noise-induced-hearing-loss
www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-are-we-hearing-loss/
www.betterhearing.org/hearingpedia/hearing-loss-prevention/
www.hearing-loss.com/noise-induced-hearing-loss
www.ama-assn.org/pressroom/2012/04/ama-recommends-noise-induced-hearing-loss/

Nobody...nobody...has offered us any assistance, nobody has acknowledged our situation in which the home we have put all our love and affection into is now being damaged. Nobody has even offered to help develop any kind of mitigation strategy. Nobody has offered any remediation plans, (other than a very vague statement from Supercars that insurance will cover any damage). After all the mistreatment to date, this doesn't offer any comfort.

When we leave our home we are confronted with destructive and intimidating road works in every direction.

Our home is no longer our sanctuary, our family is under stress. We have all been in tears at one point or another as a direct result of activities surrounding this disaster.

We never wanted this event. We never asked for it. The event is leading this once-great city down a path of corporate greed, corruption, un-sustainability, total neglect (and what appears to be contempt) for any environmental protection, sustainable living, or any thought for the needs of future generations."

Our Lord Mayor asked for this. Where is she when those affected by what appears to be a rash decision, one she barely remembers making, need some support and answers?