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Friday July 6, 2012

\$1.60 including GST

**PREACHERS:** Heads poked out of shop doors and passers-by were nearly bowled over by pilgrims in Auburn Street yesterday. "I have come with about 60 young people on a pilgrimage for Jesus," Fr George Bartos (pictured with guitar) said. "We are Catholics walking through a few towns on our way to Melbourne to spread the love of Jesus Christ, and to let them know their sins are forgiven, even though they may not feel worthy," he said.



Photo: Antony Dubber

# Residential grog shop

By LOUISE THROWER

A FLOOD of letters and phone calls have failed to sway Council approval of a suburban liquor store. Objectors to the expanded Crestwood store, including a 65 square metre liquor shop, argued the area has enough "social problems" without ready alcohol sales.

"This location is close to the Housing Commission area bor-

dered by Gibson St where many disadvantaged families live, whose lives are already compromised by drugs and alcohol," one opponent wrote to Council.

Others wrote in the same vein, saying alcohol promoted antisocial behaviour and bottle shops had no place in a residential area. Several asked that their names be suppressed.

But on Tuesday councillors unanimously issued deferred approval for the development at 4

Crestwood Drive. Full consent kicks in once the store obtains a liquor licence and an alcohol free zone, 24 hour security and CCTV cameras have been implemented.

Councillors were convinced the measures would address concerns.

Cr Geoff Peterson told the meeting he had fielded many phone calls from opponents.

All arguments were well founded but in the end he couldn't draw the same conclusions, he

said. He had researched the BWS and First Choice Liquor outlets, approved in 2007 and 2009 respectively, but could not find any accompanying rise in antisocial behaviour.

"I looked at case studies in the UK and Norway where alcohol is treated as a commodity on supermarket shelves and there is no connection between the incidence of alcohol premises and inappropriate behaviour," Cr Peterson said.

"I couldn't come to a conclusion that would make me vote against this proposal."

Planners too had warned against drawing the link, though acknowledging public interest was a "relevant consideration."

"Refusal of the application on these grounds could be challenged in court with an uncertain outcome," they said.

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