



**The Cerini Centre  
Affordable Social Housing Project**

# We walk again

## At five ... they hike 12 miles a day!



**T**HIRTY-FIVE Roman Catholic school children from Yarra Junction are doing their own "Timbertop hike" every day — but not as a physical fitness course.

They are walking up to 12 miles a day to and from school at Warburton because there is no other way of getting there.

While pupils of other schools in the area go by bus, these children — aged five to 11 — from St. Joseph's Primary School, march in file along the highway to Warburton.

Heavily-laden logging trucks from beyond Warburton rumble past the children as they keep in step with two priests from the school.

The return trek each day takes almost four hours.

### Buses go empty

The parish priest at Warburton, Father Cerini, said last night he had already asked some of the less robust five-year-olds to stay home from school.

He said the march was made more painful by the children being four or five chartered buses taking Warburton to the high school at Yarra Junction.

The buses return empty along the road.

Father Cerini said he had applied to the Education Department for permission to use the chartered buses when they returned to Warburton after taking off the high school children, and it was refused.

The Assistant Minister of Education, Mr. Mosler, has said that the Crown Solicitor was examining an Education Department application to see if it could be stretched.

Until this year the school did have its own bus, run at parish expense, but Father Cerini said it was impossible to pick up children from all the outlying areas rather than provide a service for a few.

Now he and Father J. Hervey drive to Yarra Junction before 8 a.m. each morning to meet the children assembling there.

Leaving the car, they trudge along the road with the children, the Yarra Junction walkers assembling at the school ground for the trek home. The two priests go along to pick up their car at the other end.

The children are enthusiastic about the walk, and happy walking to school now and are getting on well with their work, he added.

"But what will happen when the poverty worsens? Or when the weather sets in?"

← LEFT: Father Cerini takes a tired straggler by the hand on the homeward trek to Yarra Junction yesterday.

BELOW: Father Cerini (left) and Father Hervey rest at Yarra Junction with their charges after their six-mile hike from Warburton.



During National Homelessness Week on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, we will re-enact Fr Cerini's famous walk to highlight the lack of action locally for the homeless in the Valley.

For the past two years Government support to deliver on this project has been mainly restricted to emails of encouragement.

The walk highlights the need for all three levels of Government (Local, State and Federal) to actively and purposefully consult with their local communities.

Sunday 13th August at 11am, walking the Rail Trail from Millgrove CFA to the Cerini Centre, Warburton

In 1966 Fr Cerini successfully marched 35 children between Yarra Junction and Warburton for two weeks to protest against the children being banned from the local school bus. Melbourne newspapers ran the story and the Education Department relented. Once again the various levels of government are deaf, this time over the plight of the homeless in the Upper yarra. WE NEED ANOTHER WALK TO WAKE THEM UP.

More information at [cerinicentre.com](http://cerinicentre.com)



# Who are we?



The Warburton Advancement League (WAL) has been in continuous operation since early last century when enthusiastic local community members joined together to present a concise and consistent voice on issues relevant to Warburton's growth, prosperity and authenticity. The Advancement League has supported countless community projects.

The Advancement League include personnel from the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) who have identified a significant and urgent need for affordable social housing in the Upper Yarra region. To meet this need a working group was formed in 2021 to develop solutions that can provide more social housing in the Upper Yarra to meet this need.



# Quotes from those in need



*“The house we were living in was put up for sale and sold really quickly which was good for the guy that owned it but we couldn’t find anywhere to go. We got a place in the valley which is a roof over our heads but my teenage son has to sleep in a tent in the back yard because there aren’t enough beds for all of us.”*

K and T (family of six, one adult full-time employment)

*“We moved here two years ago to raise our daughter in this beautiful town. My husband works from home, so it was perfect. We love it here, but the owner is now selling. We looked for two months but there was nothing available, so we are moving to Warragul, we are heartbroken but at least we have a house”.*

L and B (family of three, one adult full-time employment)

*“My daughter and I have to move because the house is now sold. I’ve applied for every property that I can afford but there aren’t very many. I don’t have a car so have to get transport to inspections. My daughter’s dad lives in Warburton and we have shared care. I don’t know what to do because there is nowhere we can go”.*

S (single parent, family benefits and casual work)

# What are we proposing?



- We propose to build 12 rental homes within Warburton, with the hope of adding a few more in the future.
- We will keep costs substantially lower by building the homes as a Residential Land Lease.
- These homes will have 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms to provide accommodation for families. At least 2 homes will be reserved for short-term family crisis accommodation.
- This economical building model could make affordable social housing available throughout Victoria easier to achieve.

# What is an MHE?



- A Residential Land Lease is an area of land that has the permission and infrastructure to support the installation of pre-manufactured homes.
- Pre-manufactured homes are built off-site and assembled on the Residential Land Lease, the houses are relocatable. Typically the Residential Land Lease is owned and run by a Company or Organisation and the home is owned by the resident.
- Examples are Caravan Parks and community lifestyle villages.
- **We propose that an Organisation is set up to own and run the MHE and also the houses that reside on it and that these homes are rented out to those in need at a fair cost and in a controlled manner.**

# Our MHE implementation



- We will ensure that the rents on these homes are affordable.
- These homes will provide leases for up to 5 years.
- At least 2 homes to be maintained for short-term family crisis accommodation.
- We will establish a mix of two-bedroom, three-bedroom and four bedrooms homes to cater for a range of family needs.

# Our MHE implementation



- The homes will be managed by an accredited Registered Housing Provider with a local presence, preferably onsite.
- The homes will be situated close to schools and public transport.
- Assistance and financial counselling will be provided to help people to obtain longer-term affordable accommodation



# The challenges we face



- We need more than sympathetic statements from governing bodies.
- The land belongs to three different owners who support the project but the title boundary present problems that need to addressed
- We need a Tier 1 building provider
- We need Government funding to proceed with the project.
- We need some governing departments (local council, State and Federal Governments) to make sincere efforts to overcome paperwork obstacles

# Benefits for the Government



- The Government will get more houses built for their dollar than standard housing estates, more bang for their buck.
- The Government will avoid the problems sometimes associated with social housing because of the control and authority management has under MHE legislation.
- Essentially the project development has been outsourced. An enormous amount of groundwork has already been completed and the project only needs permissions and funding to move ahead.

# Our proposed location



- The ideal site we feel would meet all the criteria is the former Cerini Centre (originally St Joseph's school) site in Warburton.
- The land is made up of several titles and has an undeveloped road reserve running through it. The titles are presently owned by the Catholic Diocese, the Department of Education and the Yarra Ranges Shire Council.
- The Project area spans over 25,000 sqm, however due to the topography, which is at places quite steep and heavily vegetated, the usable land area is approximately 13,000 sqm





12 Homes

Cerini Centre

Possible  
future  
boundaries

Proposed  
12 New  
Homes



# Fr Charles Cerini



Fr Cerini was a prominent local figure until his untimely passing in 1968. Prior to becoming parish priest at Warburton he was a chaplain at Pentridge prison and founded Victoria's first half-way house. His funeral cortege was two miles long. One local described him as “the best bloke I ever knew”.





# The Cerini Centre



With strong community support Fr Cerini designed and built this highly original circular building as a Catholic school. When the school moved it became the Cerini Centre hosting wedding receptions, book fairs, parish and community functions. Before closing it housed students from the community house .







# The Cerini Centre now



Boarded up, disused, splattered with graffiti and awaiting its new role as part of the Affordable Social Housing Project.





# Example relocatable homes





# Example relocatable homes





# More resources



- Visit our website – [cerinicentre.com](http://cerinicentre.com) all the documents below are there
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report – [LINK](#)
- Bushfire Development Report for Warburton Social & Affordable Housing – [LINK](#)
- Emergency Management Plan – [LINK](#)
- Warburton Site Plan - [LINK](#)

# Cerini Centre – Affordable Social Housing

*A Social Housing project inspired by the life of Fr Charles Cerini*



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## Cerini Centre – Affordable Social Housing



The Warburton Advancement League has been in continuous operation since 1954 when enthusiastic local community members joined together to present a concise and consistent voice on issues relevant to Warburton's growth, prosperity and authenticity.

SEARCH

### Pages within this website

[Affordable Social Housing Plan](#)  
[Cerini Centre](#)

**Visit our website - [cerinicentre.com](http://cerinicentre.com)**