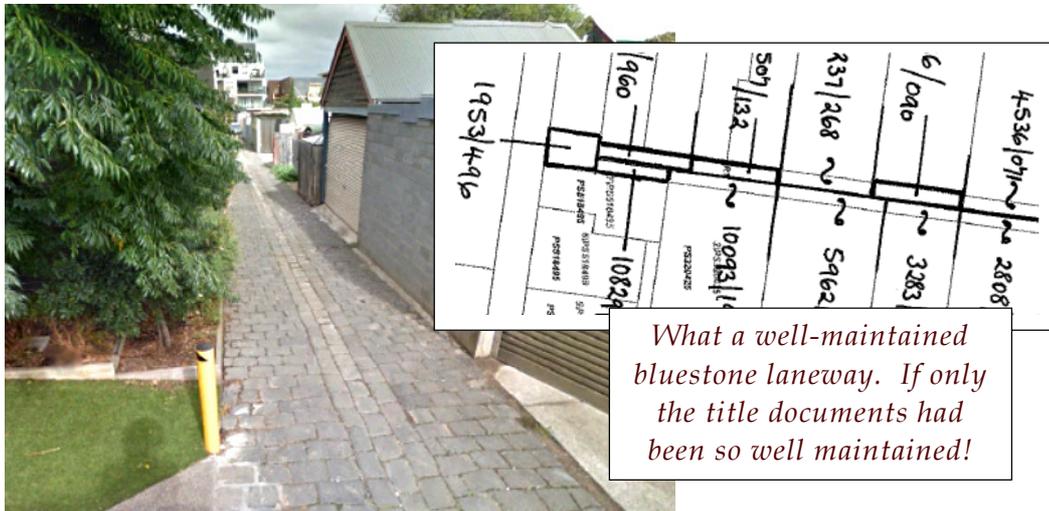


# AD HOCKERY

from LEX LOCI ... 19 NOVEMBER 2015

*An occasional one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy*

## A Beautiful Bluestone Laneway



It's almost a lost art – the construction of bluestone laneways. Part of inner Melbourne's history: here and there you can find signs of the iron-wheeled carts that once plied them.

But who owns them? For a hundred years, we have just assumed it's the Council. If it needs cleaning or maintaining, we call the Council. But suddenly, in an era of gentrification and multi-unit development, abutting owners start looking at their title documents. What a mess!

Check out the title diagram above: some bits of this lane appear to belong to abutting properties, and some bits still remain in the name of the (no doubt worthy) gent who owned the whole area back in 1870.

**Now is perhaps not the time to get into the maze of common and statutory law that leads to the following conclusion: Council does indeed own the lane; the title documents are worthless.**

Does it matter? Most of the time, no. But when an abutting owner wants to build over our lane, or a service utility company refuses to lay down a gas main, then suddenly we have a problem. Actually two problems.

Problem number one: persuading our interlocutor of the lane's true legal status (we can handle that one). Problem number two: relaying the beautiful bluestone which we've just persuaded some utility company that they are in fact allowed to dig up.

See you there! Lex Loci