

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL PARK PROTECTION GROUP (RPPG) GIVEN AT THE AGM ON 21 October 2017

Over the last year, RPPG has been involved in a number of issues as outlined below:

Issues over the past year included:

- **Julianne Bell**
 - It was with great sadness that our “people’s warrior” died in January 2017. Julianne will be difficult to replace in energy, knowledge and ideas.....
 - As a group we published death notices and contributed to the obituaries that were published. It was wonderful to see the large attendance at the funeral.
 - We were approached by the City Council about a photo to be placed in Walmsley House to honour Julianne’s contribution. After quite a hunt we found and got permission from the Age to use their photo of Julianne. A function was organised by Councillor Rohan Leppert to celebrate the work of Julianne. It was held in August 2017 where a photograph of Julianne in full flight at the Psych Hospital was put on display at Walmsley House.
- **Development issues**
 - **Lemon Scented Gums** – Julianne was most active in opposing the tree destruction and seeking meetings with Vic Roads. Many of our members were involved in the fight to save this tree from the works to upgrade the entrance from the tollway to Flemington Rd. Despite these efforts the trees were lost.
 - **Flemington Oval.** We were active in pressing for consideration of the impact of the lights on helicopter safety and general amenity. This was an extended battle but all the arguments and scientific evidence we presented was ignored. Thank you to all who worked on this issue. The works have now been completed including the light towers!
 - **RCH New Pathways** – the enlargement of the pathways to the north/west of the hospital with lighting was completed. Our objections to this were mainly to do with the addition of lighting which is not in line with maintaining a “dark park”.
 - **RCH Helipad** – RPPG and FoRP met with Cr R Leppert of CoM to discuss removal of the old helipad still located in the park. This was to have been removed with the replacement hospital. Demolition still pending.
 - **Wetlands Pollution** – Melbourne Water confirmed clean up occurs monthly on the edges and on water on an as needed basis. They were happy for us to advise them if/when litter is excessive and needs further input.
 - **Parkville Gardens** – Amd C281 allowing increased heights to the last stage of development was opposed by RPPG and a presentation was prepared and presented by Joe Edmonds at the VCAT hearings. Decision still pending at date of 2017 AGM.
 - **Zoo Carparking** – the Zoo has put forward a plan to build a new multi storey carpark on parkland to the northwest of the zoo. PPL/FoRP/RPPG sent a list of questions to the Zoo management to understand the reasoning for this development. Projected patronage numbers seem dubious! No positive actions on use of public transport is mentioned. Currently overflow parking has been noted occurring on grassed areas around SNHC. Further action is planned in the coming year.
- **Meetings** – a General Meeting was held in March 2017 with Dr Greg Moore addressing the group on the means of allowing development without loss of trees plus working out the value of trees to the community. Interest was expressed in future general meetings including one on identifying birds in the park. We will try to set up meetings in 2018.
- **SNHC Advisory Committee** – we approached SNHC to re-establish the advisory committee but have yet to see happen!

Community Involvement:

- Supervision of plantings in Royal Park by a large contingent of students (volunteering their time) from Trinity College, University of Melbourne September 2016. Conducted in conjunction with Friends of Royal Park. Cards were sent to the staff from Trinity to say thank you for involving students into the park.
- RPPG supported City of Melbourne community plantings in Royal Park last Oct, Nov 2016 and June 2017. Plantings were in the remnant vegetation site in West Parkville and grasslands planting at Bayles Street. It wonderful to see the growth this Spring. We had several passers by stop to assist with the plantings.
- RPPG also participated in the Bird Survey in April 2017 organised by Friends of Royal Park.
- We would also encourage members to report hazards/suspicious behaviour to Council, especially given a number of deliberately lit fires last year/this year.
- Some members attended a Bush Tucker walk and talk in ANG and surrounds led by Bruce Crotty, from Serco. It is hoped to have further such events in 2018

Website: We hope that this has been of use to people as a repository of information on the park as well as highlighting activities. If you have any suggestions for improvements please let us know.

Facebook: we are now on Facebook!

Our banner: Our banner was missing for some time but was discovered at Julianne's house earlier this year.

Royal Park Cards

We wish to thank our Committee member Margaret Jungwirth for all the effort put in to prepare cards which have been a great hit with the community at large.

We would also like to give a special thankyou to Anne Phefley, our Secretary for all the work she does in organising us, the events, the catering and just about everything else!

I would like to end by thanking all our RPPG members, friends and allies for assisting over the years with all the hard work involved in rallies, protests, blockades, publicity stunts, attending meetings and keeping the Government and Council under constant surveillance . As usual I will end with a well known quote from Patrick White at a 1972 Rally, Centennial Park, Sydney.

"Your parks are your breathing spaces. Guard them, cherish them. Parkland is valuable and greedy eyes see the money in it. So you must always be on the alert. Hang onto your breathing spaces in this developing and already over-congested city. Protect your parks from the pressure of political concrete."

Paul Leitinger Convenor Royal Park Protection Group October 2017