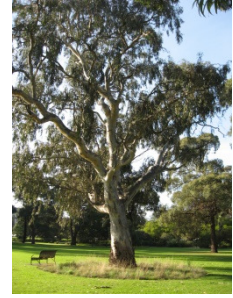




RPPG UPDATE JUNE 2018



Sorry this is a bit late but I have tried to put together a short update on things that have happened over the last few months. I will try to be more diligent in the future.

Kind regards

Anne

Flemington Farmers Market

We have been granted access to a stall at the farmers market on the 3rd Sunday of each month. This provides an opportunity to talk to people about the park . We have a brochure entitled Rediscover Royal Park. This has several areas of interest within the park and has a brief history too.

We are able to sell our cards at the market. They provide a good opening to talk about the park as people are attracted to the birds and plants. We have a small membership form which has a slogan on the back being Parks Need Lovers.

Zoo Plans

Together with other interested parties we are in discussion with the zoo regarding their desire to have more parking space. As you will remember the parking used by the zoo is actually parking space for all park users. Discussions are continuing with an emphasis on promoting public transport.

Bee walk

We were invited on a walk in the Native Garden to look at native bees. It was most interesting and we were lucky enough to see several. Blue banded bees are amazing. There was a good attendance of adults and children. Roch Desmier de Chenon led the walk.

Members meeting March 22nd

The talk on native bees in RP was given by Roch Desmier de Chenon was well received with over 18 people in attendance. Roch gave an insight into bees (90 varieties identified in RP) and where they live (some underground) and their size (8mm to 2mm!).

Some highlights:

- 120 million years ago bees switched to pollen and nectar.
- There are 7 families of native bees.
- There are long tongue bees and short tongue bees.
- Some are as tiny as 2mm.
- Many of the tiny bees nest in the soil.
- The inventory of native bees in the park is 93.

.....So much to learn!

Here is one of the photos from Roch's collection. You can see more by visiting his website.



State Netball and Hockey Centre expansion

We were invited to attend a Stakeholder Workshop at the State Netball and Hockey Centre on **Tuesday 1 May 2018**.

This workshop was to provide an update on the design and planning for the proposed upgrades to the State Netball and Hockey Centre, and introduce key members of the project team moving forward.

They are to come back with more detailed plans following this session.

We applied to be reinstated on the SNHC Advisory committee but were unsuccessful. Protectors of Public Lands now fill this role.

Rabbits

Unfortunately all attempts at controlling rabbits in the park have been of limited success.

The rabbit warrens are at the Children's Hospital. Plans are being formulated for a new approach including baiting. Unfortunately many people think the rabbits are cute.

The rabbits are doing lots of damage and have spread to Royal Parade area. New plantings require plant guards to have a hope of survival,

Council study for traffic within the park

The City of Melbourne has undertaken a study of all the transport modes in and around the park.

The **Royal Park Transport Assessment** will be a technical report, exploring current and forecasting future people movement and visitation in all modes of transport to Royal Park. It will provide evidence (including, but not limited to, data collection and analysis), best practice examples and a framework for decision making and will be used to inform policy, management and future improvements to the park.

Together with Friends of Royal Park we had a presentation from the **City of Melbourne** regarding a project being **Royal Park Transport study**. This is looking at access, use of space and severance. This covers roads, public transport, bike paths and parking in the park.

The aim of the study is to

- Reduce severance,
- Release space and increase access.
- increase the coherence of the Park especially the Australian landscape.

The presentation given may be accessed on the website.

It is important to note that the project does not include any specific or council endorsed proposals at this stage but just early ideas and a plan to capture more data.

However as this will form part of the basis for a revised Master Plan we are most anxious to be involved and to speak up for the park as a bush park protected for future generations.

We hope to have an update at our AGM.

Monthly activities in the park

To provide more activities for people in the park we spoke with Chris Nicholson, the Royal Park officer, and together with Friends of Royal Park we are now spending 2 hours on the third Wednesday of each month working on a task in the park. We have been clearing parts of the remnant site, planting in the native garden and this month we potted on wallaby grass seedlings for later plantings.

To protect the large trees in the Native Garden beds have been created around them and planted with native grasses and wildflowers. We have taken part in the latest plantings and are looking forward to the display in Spring.

Understorey plantings

The City Council have a project, Nature in the City, and they are looking at Understorey and Ground cover planting opportunities in Royal Park. We received an update in June as to their progress.

The presentation was given by Lee Harrison and David Callow, Urban Sustainability, City of Melbourne and Assoc. Professor Nick Williams, School of Ecosystem & Forest Sciences, University of Melbourne.

Trial beds are to be planted to determine the best way to establish the plantings.

Nick Williams described the existing tree/shrub/grassland/remnants areas in RP and their past legacies. These include not having an indigenous seed bank in the grasslands and grassy woodlands seed bank. High phosphate and nitrogen levels exist (partic. from past sports fields, including most of the Grassland Circle). Ideally they would scrape/remove top 100mm of soil, then sow indigenous seed into added sand topsoil. However the Grassland circle cannot be used due to presence of asbestos. An alternate solution to be used in RP trials which is to add carbon, in the form of sugar, then sow indigenous seed and possibly burn. 18 5msq plots have been pegged out in RP (1) in tree haloes and (2) mulched grassland areas. Grass seed mix to be planted will include Kangaroo grass, Silky Blue Grass and a Forb mix.

The plan is:

- establish plots - treat with herbicide
- rake and sow seed (August)
- Add sugar (Aug/Oct/Dec) - Assess nitrogen level using buried ion exchange beads
- Monitor germination and growth of all species.

Measurements will include number of plants, plant biomass and vegetative cover.

It was interesting to hear that Nick has been able to prepare a list of plants that would have been in Royal Park originally from the Herbarium records that are now computerised. He is going to provide a copy.

Birds that are currently in the park

At the moment a walk in the park may provide sightings of galahs, scarlet robins, blue wrens, spotted pardalotes, golden whistlers and black shouldered kites among many others.



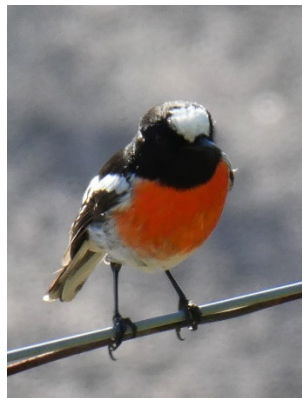
Black shouldered kite



Golden Whistler



Spotted Pardalote



Scarlet robin



galah

Article in the Age in case you missed it

This article appeared in the The Age recently...

The simple rewards of our wide open spaces

Gabriella Coslovich

Published: December 3 2017 - 12:15AM

Some time ago, an expert flew in to Melbourne from some place where men know what's best and told us that our parks lacked purpose. They needed more attractions, he said, such as restaurants, ice-skating rinks and merry-go-rounds, and more seating.

Occasionally, this expert's advice drifts into mind as I aimlessly wander through Royal Park, that glorious tract of purposeless land that cushions the city edge. There is little to do in Royal Park. You can walk – yourself or your dog. You can run, if you prefer. You can push a pram. You can ride a bike, or read a book.

You can bird watch. I've seen egrets and kookaburras, galahs and sulphur-crested cockatoos, timid eastern rosellas and twilight raids of rowdy lorikeets, downy-soft ducklings and huge "baby" magpies squawking to be fed.

You can fly kites. A man often does, usually on weekends, setting his kites off from the centre of what I have come to think of as the "magic" grass circle. Because it is, in this age, magic to have a giant circle devoted to nothing more than native grass. Unstructured space is a rarity in a society that feels the need to constantly distract and infantilise us with screens and noise, as though, somehow, being quiet with one's thoughts – with oneself – is too frightful to contemplate.

The man has a friar-like halo of long white hair and a flock of many-splendored kites. Sometimes he flies an enormous octopus with long black tendrils that ripple in the wind. Other times, more traditional gliders.

One memorable Saturday afternoon he flew two kites, side by side, that looked like a flutter of snowflakes or twin stars. I lay in the grass a respectful distance away and watched as he gently steered the strings and made his kites soar.

He was like a musician with his instruments, or a dancer on the stage. Subtle, graceful, instinctive. I watched and watched, transfixed by his kites and serenity, by the purposelessness of it all.

Far above the kites I spotted a party of pelicans, flying in formation, a V-shape that evolved, that broke and reformed as the group changed direction and a new bird took the lead. I watched and watched until the wind dropped and so, too, the kites.

The man sailed them smoothly back to earth. He then turned to me and held out his arms as if to say "ah, well".

And I clapped. I'd had all the attractions I could want.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/comment/m02columnist-20171117-gzne2t.html>

This is the reverse side of our A5 membership form that we take to the market

PARKS NEED LOVERS



RESPECT

PROTECT

PROMOTE **ROYAL PARK**

GET INVOLVED

ASK US HOW

ROYAL PARK PROTECTION GROUP