

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL PARK PROTECTION GROUP (RPPG) GIVEN AT THE AGM ON 11 August 2018

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

Issues over the past year included:

- **Development issues**
 - **Flemington Oval.** The works on this oval were completed in the last year however a new issue is the parking of vehicles on the tarmac around the change rooms. We have taken this up with the CoM.
 - **RCH Helipad** – Demolition still pending. RCH appear to want it to remain despite promises that it would be removed.
 - **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 saga still going! Representations to Ministers and others undertaken by one of our committee members with other Parkville Gardens residents concerned about this egregious request for more profit for the developer at community expense.
 - **Zoo Carparking** – nothing has progressed on this matter. Discussions have focussed on refuting projected growth figures and the promotion of public transport.
 - **SNHC** – attended meeting at SNHC to hear about proposed redevelopment of the site. Second meeting held on 1st May. The objective is to increase the number of netball courts as well as add a half size hockey field all within the current footprint. Revised plans are to come based on feed back received. We stressed no road widening and better lighting among many other issues.
 - **Remnant Protection** – misuse of the remnant area has seen damage occurring to plants and disturbance of the birdlife in the area with dogs, bicycles and joggers regularly entering the area. We are hoping to erect some simple signs to advise people to respect the area and tread lightly if they must use it!
 - **CoM 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 CoM presentation may be accessed on the website. The study is planned to be completed by July.
 - There is a plan to increase **understorey plantings** in the park. There have been 2 meetings and some test beds will now be set up to find the best planting methods. The nutrient levels are very high in the park so there needs to be trials for the best approach. The understorey will be grasses and small plants.
 - **Rabbits** in the park. There are large numbers of rabbits in the park. Lots of damage and new plants need guards to survive. The rabbits are based at RCH. There have been attempts but not really successful. We are advised that baiting will start shortly and then there will be burrow elimination.
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- **Meetings** – a General Meeting was held in March 2018 with Roch Desmier de Chenon giving a wonderful presentation on native bees in Royal Park. This meeting was very well attended and leads one to think we should do more of them!
- **SNHC Advisory Committee** – following our approach to SNHC to re-establish the advisory committee we were invited to submit application to be on this panel however a member from PPL was selected to attend rather than from RPPG.
- Lighting is still an issue with SNHC lights reported as left on overnight. Type of lighting being discussed with Council.

- Julianne Bell event. Councillor Rohan Leppart was responsible for initiating the picture of Julianne being hung at Walmsley House. We were consulted as to which picture would be most appropriate and were happy to provide the catering. Mary Chapman brought an amazing cake decorated as the park as a special tribute. It was a lovely event on August 5th was very well attended.

Community Involvement:

- Discussions with the park officer Chris Nicholson and Friends of Royal Park it was decided to set up a monthly short working bee to promote more activity and involvement in the park. On the third Wednesday morning of each month there is a joint activity. There has been cassinia weeding in the remnant, planting and weeding in the circle and ANG, seed collection, potting on of plants grown from park seeds and other activities. We have had passerbys join in too.
- We have had joint meetings with FofRP for understorey planting plans and transport study to make it easier of the City Council.
- RPPG was involved in :
 - City of Melbourne (CoM) community plantings in Royal Park in August, October and November 2017
 - CoM Hollowblitz
 - CoM Seed collection in November
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 - We helped to supervise and advise re-planting with a large student group (Trinity College, University of Melbourne) on Saturday Sept 9, 10am-12noon 2017.
 - Bird Survey in October 2017 and April 2018 organised by Friends of Royal Park.
 - Insect Survey in November 2017 organised by Friends of Royal Park.
 - North Melbourne Spring Fling in October 2017.
 - Monthly stalls at the Flemington Farmers Market. Great opportunity to talk about the park and sell some cards.
- We would also encourage members to report hazards/suspicious behaviour to Council. We had instances of fireworks being let off prior to Christmas – a fire hazard!

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!

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!

We also want to take this opportunity to thank Joe Edmonds, who has been a committee member for some years but today, will retire from active duty. Joe has been very busy with the Amd C281 saga of late and has been a very able member of the group.

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 August 2018