



RPPG UPDATE January 2019



Hello there

Best wishes for 2019.

Lots to see and do in our wonderful Royal Park.

When visiting the park keep a look out for butterflies and native bees. Absolutely magic.

Kind regards

Anne

Hands on opportunities in the park

On the 3rd Wednesday of each month there is a working bee of about 2 hours in the park for RPPG, Friends of Royal Park(FofRP) and Serco. We meet at Walmsley House at 10am and finish with a cuppa. We hope to promote community involvement in the park as well as enjoying a group activity.

Gloves, sensible shoes and old clothes are the order of the day.

The latest one was at Walmsley House potting on plants to be planted next autumn.

Last month we were helping to remove Chilean needle grass from the grass circle. In September we were weeding in the remnant area.



Chris Nicholson, Royal Park officer, with Chilean needle grass

Flemington Farmers market

We have continued to have our stall at the Flemington Farmers market. They kindly allow us to have a stall on the 3rd Sunday of the month. We have cards to sell but the main purpose is to talk to people about the park.

We get to talk to lots of people and we have gained new members. It is a really enjoyable experience. If you have some time to spare and would like to come along and share your love of the park it would be wonderful. Just give me a call on 0412279156. The market is at 169-175 Mount Alexander Road Flemington. Tram Stop 25.

Here are Lynne and Anne in action in December. Margaret behind the camera.



On September 16th, students from RMIT second year Landscape Interior Design who had a project based on the description by Master Plan architect Ron Jones that Royal Park is “a place where the earth swells, the dome of the sky soars overhead and the horizon beckons”, came to display their projects at the stall. Great interest was generated. We greatly appreciate the support and involvement of their lecturer Ying-Lan Dann whose initiative it was.

Opportunities to assist with plantings

We are sometimes invited by Serco to provide planting guidance at community plantings. This is a great opportunity to be involved with members of the community, especially young people, in nurturing their love of nature/Royal Park.

Student plantings

On September 1st RPPG and FofRP assisted Serco in hosting the Trinity College planting in the remnant area near the Urban Camp.

On October 24th a group of German exchange students from University High did some plantings at the ANG. Members of RPPG and FofRP again assisted SERCO staff.

Landcare planting

On September 7th, RPPG and FofRP hosted an event with Landcare involving corporate volunteers. There was a planting near the Burke and Wills monument then a walk and talk wander around the park. We receive funds for this event from Landcare which will be used to support activities in the park.

CSL staff planting day

As part of CSL’s “Giving back to the community” programme, many people attended a very successful planting on July 12th at McPhersons Field (Poplar Road). It was lovely to see so many people interested in the park.

Waterbug Blitz/Dragonfly Festival

October 20th. The morning of the WaterBug blitz was very wet deterring participants. However we did manage to collect the samples for analysis from the pond in the Native Garden.

We came across 2 wood ducks with their day old ducklings.

When the rain became heavier the ducklings were gathered under mum. You can see lots of



Photo by K Oddie

In the afternoon we attended the Dragonfly Festival at State Netball & Hockey Centre to see what we had found. Experts were in attendance to help with identification. It was most interesting and it was lovely to see so many children there.

We were lucky to have a midge emerge as we watched.

Final analysis results are not yet available. However the plan is to let the pond levels drop so cleaning up and removal of mosquito fish can occur.

Flemington Road Billabong reopened



The billabong has been refurbished. It was originally designed by Gordon Ford in the 1989. The upgrade works have involved diverting the stormwater from the gully drain into the apex of the billabong via a newly created rain garden; replacing the clay lining of the pond and replanting the surrounds. An important part of the project was sourcing rocks to match the original feature rocks of the Billabong – this took a long time but was eventually successful in a paddock in Seymour. A new swale will direct water coming off Elliott Avenue into the Billabong.

It was a really hot day on December 12th but it was lovely to have the opportunity to celebrate the reopening and thank Ralf Pfleiderer, Water Sensitive Urban Design Co-ordinator, for his efforts and to acknowledge all those involved in the redevelopment. Ralf had also given a most interesting presentation on “Water and Other initiatives in Royal Park” at the FofRP AGM. We are very grateful to North Park Tennis club for allowing us to use their clubhouse for food preparation and storage.

Rabbits

As advised earlier, there has been a plague of rabbits in the park emanating from the RCH. Baiting has finally commenced and will be monitored for success. Areas have been fenced and clearly signed.

Park Planting plans

On Tuesday June 5th we joined with F of RP for an update and discussion on the Understorey and Ground Cover Planting opportunities in Royal Park.

The presentation was by Dr. Nick Williams, University of Melbourne, Burnley and Lee Harrison, Urban Forest & Ecology Team, City of Melbourne.

Lee Harrison provided an introduction to the project. It ticks 7 goals of the Council’s biodiversity strategy ‘Nature in the City’ and aims to increase understorey planting in RP in accordance with connectivity initiatives.

Nick Williams followed describing 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.

High phosphate and nitrogen levels exist (partic. from past sports fields, including most of the Grassland Circle).

18 5msq plots have been pegged out in RP (1) in tree haloes and (2) mulched grassland areas. The Grassland Circle cannot be used due to presence of remnant asbestos.

Methodology will be:

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 will be interesting to see the outcome of the trials.

Nick has compiled a list from Herbarium archives of species on similar geology from the late 1800s.

This may form an expanded plant list for the park.

Transport study

We have attended sessions run by the City of Melbourne on the Royal Park Transport Assessment being conducted to look at transport access, fragmentation due to roads and parking and use of space.

This was due to be concluded in July. However it was not finished in time for a presentation at either our AGM or General meeting. Refer to AGM for issues raised.

We have been informed that the report was to be presented on December 11th to Council. We will try to keep you informed.

Redevelopment at SNHC

There are plans to extend and modify the State Netball and Hockey Centre(SNHC).

Work is due to start shortly.

We have attended community sessions re design and have pushed for public transport to be encouraged .

We are working with Friends of Royal Park and Protectors of Public Lands on all these issues.

Cards

Margaret Jungwirth has taken more great photos and has continued to make cards for us to sell. The varied images are a great way to start conversations about the park.

Here are some of the latest images.

Sales at the Parkville PO and market are going well.



Dingy Swallow Tail



Trigger plant in ANG



Morning Flag in ANG

AGM

The AGM was held at Walmsley House on August 11th.

Our speaker was– Sam Cremean (CoM) and we were expecting the results of the Transport Study. Sam gave a brief introduction to the purpose of the study and that the new timeline is expected to be complete for Council approval in September and publish in October 2018. The work is being carried out by Phillip Boyle Consultants and is looking at how (all) forms of transport are used in the park (walk/run/bike/formal sports/tram/train/cars). The idea behind this is to inform a strategy to protect/recover/expand the Park and also form part of a future upgrade to the Master Plan. It also was **commissioned in response to requests from the Zoo and SNHC to increase parking.**

The community response survey summary data is available on line.

A number of questions were raised by members –

1. Was survey preferentially directed towards sports users?
A: No, this was not the intent.
2. How were passive users surveyed?
A: Surveys were also performed at tram stops and train station to try and collect data
3. Presentation to Parkville Association appeared to suggest increase walkway widths, added lighting were being considered?
A: This is not the intention.
4. Were lunchtime users asked eg CSL?
A: Not specifically.

We will continue to follow up the study and have asked for an update at the General meeting in October.

We all enjoyed afternoon tea and catching up with one another.

General meeting

The General meeting was held on October 27th at Walmsley House. We were privileged to have the RMIT students talk about their project. Landscape Interiors: discovering unforeseen qualities within Royal Park. It was really interesting to hear the steps they took to absorb the essence of the circle.

We then had a “brain storm” session on encouraging and assisting visitors to Royal Park.

The use of technology to help people navigate the park and enjoy its many features will be the focus of a Council grant application. The points from the meeting will be distributed for discussion shortly.

Another warrior lost

In September we lost another passionate advocate and warrior for our park.

Jean Leitinger, seen here with Julianne, died in September.

Jean loved the park and was a committee member over many years.

