



East-West Link Protestors at Site of Tunnel Junction in Royal Park, South of SNHC Melbourne Leader 14 April 2012. Photo Steve Crabtree

ROYAL PARK PROTECTION GROUP INC.

NEWS BULLETIN – JUNE 2012

Royal Park Yet Again Threatened by East West Link

Royal Park Protection Group Inc. (RPPG) members would have experienced a sense of déjà vu on 18 May 2012 when Premier Ted Baillieu launched a “review” of the East West Link (EW Link.) In a hard hat (a requisite for politicians in front of cameras) he started up a huge mechanical drill beside the Eastern Freeway not far from Hoddle Street in Clifton Hill, purportedly to obtain earth samples from the area designated as the start of the EW Link Tunnel.

The Premier appears unaware that the State Government has conducted two reviews of the EW Link, namely, the 2003 Northern Central City Corridor Study and the 2008 Eddington Review which found that most traffic is travelling north-south, not east-west. For the past 13 years RPPG has been ever vigilant over the likely destructive impact of a tunnel tollway/ freeway through Royal Park and inner suburbs. On 26 July 1999 Dr Paul Mees, then President of the Public Transport Users’ Association (PTUA), spoke at RPPG’s AGM on the topic “*Implications for the inner city of a Royal Park Freeway Link*”. Since then under the regimes of Jeff Kennett (Liberal) then Bracks and Brumby (Labor) we have fought extension of the Eastern Freeway, now known as the “EW Link”.

On 18 May when Ted Baillieu flicked the switch on the EW Link, Adam Bandt, Federal Member for Melbourne, called a protest mobilising more than 50 people within 2 hours “*to send a clear message that Melbourne residents want more trains and trams over dirty private roads to keep Melbourne liveable.*” The snap protest got coverage on all major news channels and on 774 Drive and 3AW Radio. Rod Quantock (RPPG Deputy Convenor) and Julianne Bell (Committee member) attended and spoke on Channel 10. RPPG is campaigning together with allied groups - Protectors of Public Lands Victoria Inc. (PPL VIC); Yarra Campaign for Action on Transport (YCAT); and the PTUA not only to oppose the EW Link but to support the Doncaster Rail Link (but down the Eastern Freeway not through Balwyn and Kew.) (See YCAT and RPPG websites at <http://www.ycat.org.au> and www.royalparkprotect.org.au)

On Saturday morning last the Hon. Terry Mulder MLA, Minister for Public Transport and Roads, was interviewed on 3AW about the EW Link. While this and rail projects were discussed at length, no mention was made of the Doncaster Rail Link. Hence it seems that the EW Link will get priority.

“Return to Royal Park” Project with Demolition of Old Royal Children’s Hospital Buildings

In March/April last consultations were arranged by a “community engagement consultant” hired by the Department of Health and orchestrated by the City of Melbourne who said they were going to ask people “*what they wanted*” on the 3 hectares of land on the corner of Gatehouse Street and Flemington Road. RPPG and other community organisations recommended for this land being reclaimed under the old RCH buildings an extension of open woodland of Royal Park and plantings, as specified in the Royal Park Master Plan in keeping with indigenous bushland. We said that account must be taken of the location – surrounded by gridlocked traffic - therefore the dense treed barrier in Gatehouse Street must be continued along the street frontages. The question of what people “want” (suggestions given included a maze and sports facilities) appears irrelevant as under the Royal Children’s Hospital (Land) Act 2007 this land, which is to be declared “*surplus project land*”, will be reserved by an order of the Governor in Council “*as a public park to form part of Royal Park.*”

PPL VIC and RPPG representatives met Health Minister David Davis on 30 March 2012 to raise our concerns about the above issue plus Stage 2 of the RCH redevelopment including: construction of the hotel; the second car park extension under Royal Park; the operation of the helipad; and the disposal of the mountain of spoil left in Royal Park after excavation for the first car park. In addition it was pointed out to the Minister that there was no community representative on the RCH “Reference Group”. We thank him for appointing our nominee, Kevin Chamberlin, President of the North & West Melbourne Association and past President of PPL VIC, to represent the community on the Reference Group.

Saga of “Doyle’s Dunny” at Entrance of Australian Native Garden, Royal Park

Most RPPG members will know that the Lord Mayor has, most ill advisedly in our view, attempted to fast track installation of a toilet block at the entrance to the Australian Native Garden in Royal Park. In addition to threatening the environment – 5 heritage pepper (peppercorn) trees and mature eucalypts - and being extraordinarily obtrusive (a huge 3 cubicle stainless steel model), this public convenience dubbed “Doyle’s Dunny” is to be constructed in an unsafe location as it is on a mulched garden bed; directly under the massive upper branches of a 100+ year old pepper tree; on the edge of a bike path; and directly in line with the driveway out of the Gardens. In addition, it is regarded as unwise to locate a toilet in an obscured glade of trees as it is an open invitation for “anti social behaviour”.

See <http://melbourne-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/toilets-create-bit-of-a-royal-park-stink/>

We thank members for the on-line comments on this article (still on display) and for your support over this important issue for Royal Park. We will keep you posted as we are still corresponding with Council!

Coming Events:

RPPG General Meeting Saturday 2 June 2012

Time: 10:30 am. **Date:** Saturday 2 June 2012

Venue: Walmsley House, corner of Gatehouse St. and Royal Parade Parkville. Enter off Gatehouse St.

Transport: Parking on Gatehouse St. Tram along Royal Parade. Melways 2A B4 **All welcome!**

Community Planting on World Environment Day Royal Park Sunday 3 June 2012

Time: 1 to 3 pm. **Date:** Sunday 3 June 2012 - World Environment Day. Great activity for families!

Location: Ross Straw Field, Royal Park. Enter and park off Oak St., West Parkville. Melways 29 C 11.

Activities: Native planting to help create a natural habitat for our native birds and insects (tools provided); bush tucker tasting and an indigenous plant walking trail; a free multicultural afternoon tea; and an interactive animal pen with native reptiles and other animals from “Wild Action”.

RPPG thanks the City of Melbourne for assistance with publicity under the Community Grants Program