



Rod Quantock inspects the model "village" at Brunswick Town Hall - see Page 2

Royal Park Protection Group News Bulletin II – April 2003

BRACKS' GAMES BILL SET TO LEGALISE ROYAL PARK LAND DEAL

PROTEST RALLY AT PARLIAMENT 10 APRIL 2003

On 10 April 2003 Royal Park Protection Group members and supporters rallied with banners and placards at lunchtime on the steps of Parliament House to protest over the *Commonwealth Games Arrangements (Amendment) Bill* later debated in both the Legislative Assembly and Council. Speakers condemning the Bill included Opposition MP's Ted Baillieu, Phil Honeywood and Gordon Rich Phillips; Melbourne Councillor Kimberley Kitching; Moreland Councillor Fraser Brindley; and Save Albert Park President Peter Goad. Apologies and messages of support were received, amongst others, from Rod Quantock, Melbourne Councillor Kevin Chamberlin and Dean Mighell, ETU Southern States Secretary.

Ted Baillieu, Liberal Party, Shadow Minister for Planning, speaking in the House on the Bill summed up some of the community concerns as follows: *"...the government has introduced the Commonwealth Games Arrangements (Amendment) Bill...among those new provisions is a dramatic extension of the powers of the principal act...The proposal, which is essentially a post-games proposal...uses the cover of the Commonwealth Games, and the reality is that up to 90 per cent of the games village development will occur after the games (on) the Royal Park land...This represents in reality a sale of public land without a disclosed price, the licensing of a private development without the due checks and balances and a questionable investment of public assets. It provides exceptional, exclusive and advantageous planning controls over development of the land for some 10 years. In reality, if the bill passes it will add substantial value to the deal for the developer. Whether there will be any added value to the state is questionable. The bottom line is that the principal components of the bill relate to a real estate deal."* Hansard

We do not believe the assurances given by Minister Madden that there is no threat to Royal Park posed by this development nor that the "Village Park" contains environmentally-friendly features. He stated in the Upper House that: *"The Honourable Bill Forwood raised the issue of open space and issues regarding the Royal Park Protection Group and areas surrounding Royal Park...Mr Forwood would know that the Royal Park Protection Group is often very vocal in relation to issues in and around the Royal Park area. The Royal Park area is one of great significance for the City of Melbourne."*

NEXT ACTION ATTEND UPPER HOUSE DEBATE ON GAMES BILL

RPPG members and supporters are asked to demonstrate our opposition to the Bill i.e. to the Games Village/Real Estate Development, when it is referred to the Upper House next week. This could be on 30 April or 1 May. Attend the Public Gallery in the Legislative Council Chamber. Ring Rebecca in the Upper House Procedures Office at Parliament House on 9651 8674 after 3 pm on 29 April to enquire when the debate on the Games Bill will be scheduled or ring Julianne on 98184114 / 0408022408 or see our website www.royalparkprotect.org.au for details

See the full quotes in the debates in Parliament by accessing <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au>

OTHER "VILLAGE" NEWS

Protest Rally at Brunswick Town Hall 19 March 2003

On 19 March 2003, RPPG members gathered at the Brunswick Town Hall to view the plans and a model finally released for public exhibition by Major Projects Victoria and the developers "The Village Park Consortium" (Australand and Citta Property Group). Rod Quantock was photographed explaining some of the more shocking features of this monster real estate development of 1,000 units. (See Page 1 on the lower right hand side of the photo). These include the wall of fifteen 6 to 9 storey apartment blocks, resembling old housing commission high-rise, lining the freeway (termed the "buffer zone" as it is intended to shield the rest of the site from the freeway noise). See also the terracotta rooves of what remains of the heritage Hospital buildings, which will be hemmed in by the wall to wall units, crowded in by the L-shaped aged care facility new building to the south-west; and their landscaped surrounds lost when 1,000 mature trees are clear-felled for the development. (A section of the unit development is visible in the far, left hand lower corner.) The tiny patch of green is the so-called community sports oval but is not big enough to allow a proper games of sport of the next-door soccer field of the Reggio Calabria Club.

Commonwealth Games Planning Advisory Committee (Games Village)

Last week RPPG put in a three part submission to Minister Madden's Planning Advisory Committee; a general overall view of the development, heritage issues and traffic/transport problems. A special thanks to members who contributed to this monumental task and put in a very professional effort. The submission will be put on the website so members can access it easily. The Committee may agree to hear our submission sometime in May. Before this happens, a "directions hearing" will be held obviously to instruct persons wanting to make a presentation to the Committee how to behave.

The RPPG is cynical about the value of making submissions to Minister Madden's Committees. This is especially so given the Minister fails to release their reports. We are still waiting on the reports on Environmental Benchmarks for the 2006 Commonwealth Games September 2002 by his Environment Advisory Committee and on the report on the Historical Research into the Royal Park Land Status February 2003.

Environment Committee of the City of Melbourne 5 pm Tuesday 6 May Town Hall

Members are encouraged to attend this meeting to show support for Councillors as the Royal Park wetlands (requisitioned by the "Games Village" developer) is up for discussion.

Publicity

The publicity subcommittee has been disbanded and all arrangements for events plus media contacts are to be channelled through our Media Spokesperson - Julianne Bell - and the Committee to ensure amongst other things that we are covered for public liability insurance.

Media

Members might be interested in following up recent Age coverage, if you have missed them - "The 'best' real estate deal in state's history?" by Kenneth Davidson in the Age of 14 April 2003; "C'mon Get Behind the Games" by Justin Madden in the Age of 17 April 2003 (replying to Kenneth Davidson); and "Games to face scrutiny" by Richard Baker of 14 April 03 - the Auditor General is to investigate the financing of the Games. Also letters by Ted Baillieu and Ian Stewart the Age 18 April 03.

An oft-quoted quote: "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." Patrick White addressing the Save Centennial Park rally in Sydney on 18 June 1972.