



Photo David Tatnall

Save Royal Park from State Sanctioned Vandalism



Royal Park Protection Group News Bulletin – April 2003

GOVERNMENT MOVES TO LEGALISE ROYAL PARK LAND GRAB

In early March Victorians were hit with revelations that the 2006 Commonwealth Games budget has blown out to \$1.1 billion. The Government will have to find \$400 million to fund the Games.

Then, on 17 March 2003, Major Projects Victoria unveiled plans by the developers "The Village Park Consortium" (Australand and Citta Property Group), which reveal that construction of a Games Village is just an excuse for the Bracks Government to give away prime parkland and heritage buildings in Royal Park to private real estate developers. Only 200 of 1,000 units will be built for the Games Village, the developers can wait and see until 2012 how the market performs before building the remaining 800 dwellings. This is in order "to maximise profits." The Government will have to provide "temporary housing extensions" i.e. portables on site to supplement accommodation. Contrary to Commonwealth Games Federation specifications, athletes will end up being crammed 25 to a unit and forced to sleep in garages, kitchens and living areas. Plans also reveal that – post Games – the height of some of the huge apartment blocks which will line the freeway will be increased to 9 storeys and that the "social housing" tenants are to be isolated in one block, apparently so prospective, wealthy purchasers will not be offended by the proximity of poor people.

Now we learn that the Government is going to legitimise these Royal Park land deals. On 20 March 2003 John Thwaites, Minister for Environmental Sustainability, introduced to Parliament the *Commonwealth Games Arrangements (Amendment) Bill*, which will confer on the Minister for the Commonwealth Games complete and untrammelled powers over the land and its development – including after the Games have finished. RPPG has always claimed that the Royal Park Hospital land (the designated Games Village site) was originally part of Royal Park and was public parkland. A recent Government study, which the Government refuses to release, on the "*Historical Research into Royal Park's Land Status*" confirms, apparently, our claim. If the Government were confident of their position, then they would not need to pass a law making the site "unalienated land." If this Bill is enacted, the Minister can declare works and development to be "games related facilities" and has the power to move and close roads without normal planning processes. It is clear that the powers given extend to the period after the Games, and to works and development, which have no connection to the Games. Our legal advisor commented that "*the removal of normal planning processes, and taking the decision making away from the experts in planning, such as the local government of the area, as this does, and giving it to the Minister for the Commonwealth Games, when the development concerned is very large and is not related to the Commonwealth Games, is a serious departure from longstanding principles of planning and good governance.*" (Watch the Age for articles on this subject) The implications for Royal Park, Albert Park and other inner city parks plus the residents of surrounding suburbs are clear.

The Bill is due to be debated on Tuesday 8 April 2003 and RPPG will stage a lunchtime protest on the steps of Parliament House. Check our website www.royalparkprotect.org.au for details see also Page 2.

More on the "Games Village" Debacle

Opposition to Developer's Royal Park Land Grab for "Village" Wetlands

The Melbourne City Council has been and, to date, is still opposed to the location of the Games Village in Royal Park. The plans for the Games Village/real estate development show wetlands, which are on Council freehold land and in Royal Park, as part of the development. At the March monthly Environment and Finance Committee meetings, Councillors put through resolutions reasserting Council's control over the land. With RPPG support, the North Melbourne Association submitted the draft resolutions to Council, which were passed. (The model Village see below does not show the wetlands).

More Royal Park News

State Netball and Hockey Centre (SNHC) Attempts to Expand into Royal Park

The SNHC's parking for netball and hockey patrons has shrunk within their precinct (State Government alienated land) as management has handed over an area for corporate parking, and for priority parking for the Tigers basketball teams. Also some of their overflow carparking is not operational apparently due to original poor construction. It seems that due to falling revenues, the SNHC is now advertising as a conference and reception centre. (See the Yellow Pages). Melbourne City Council staff has been persuaded to allow the SNHC patrons to park in the area at the north entrance of the Zoo in Royal Park. One Councillor apparently gave permission for the track to be lit up by having obtrusive, illegal lights put up on the tram poles contrary to Council policy, which states that Royal Park is a dark park. Now Council staff members have submitted for a planning permit to be approved to put a barbeque in the park on the hilltop opposite the SNHC. There is no public parking for park users, so is obviously intended for SNHC patrons' virtual sole use. The project was not submitted to the Royal Park Master Plan Advisory Committee for a final decision on the location of the barbeque, thus making a mockery of the consultation process in the City of Melbourne. The same thing happened with other permits for the Australian Native Garden.

What's On?

During April

View the plans and the model of the Games Village at Brunswick Town Hall Foyer through April. The model is not of the Games Village, as advertised, but of the real estate development.

Monday 31 March 2003

7:30 pm to 9 pm Major Projects Victoria (MPV) and the developers "The Village Park Consortium" (VPC) will hold a "briefing" session on the plans for the "2006 Games Village" and the "Village Park" development at the Clinical Services Building "on the Games Village site" (MPV words not mine). To RPPG this means the Royal Park Hospital site. This is the Clayton's consultation – a consultation after the decision has been made and plans developed.

(MPV contact: C Pascuzzi Ph: 9655 8746 mob: 0421 616 459)

Wednesday 2 April 2003

8 pm The Publicity Sub-committee of the Royal Park Protection Group will hold its next meeting in the Mayor's Room of the Brunswick Town Hall (entry from Dawson St.) RPPG would particularly welcome Brunswick residents to the meeting.

Thursday 3 April 2003

7.30-9.00pm MPV and VPC provide more briefings this time on "Traffic Issues". This should be of great interest to Brunswick and Parkville residents. Same venue.

Tuesday 8 April 2003

10am onwards. Debate in the Lower House of Parliament on the "Commonwealth Games Arrangements (Amendment) Bill." (Was scheduled for 3 April.) If possible, please attend in the public galleries and, at lunchtime, join the protest on the steps of Parliament House in Spring Street. To check ring Parliament House on Monday 7 April and ask to speak to the Lower House Papers Office or look at our website www.royalparkprotect.org.au or contact Julianne Bell RPPG Convenor 9818 4114 or 0408022408

Quote "The golden rule is – he who has the gold makes the rules" The King in the Wizard of Id.