



THE ROYAL (CAR) PARK

Royal Park Protection Group News Bulletin – May 2007

The Cars (and Buses) That Ate Royal Park

Brens Drive Bus Pull In Bay: In October 2006 the City of Melbourne (COM) issued notice of a planning permit, supported by Greens Councillor Fraser Brindley (Chair of the Council's Environment Committee and the Royal Park Standing Committee), for construction of a bus-parking/pull in bay on Brens Drive just north of the Urban Camp. (Apparently Camp children cannot walk the 100 yards from/to the State Netball and Hockey Centre's bus station and buspark.) COM still claims, however, to be reducing parking in parkland. RPPG lodged an objection to issue of this permit, which necessitates further alienation of hilltop parkland and the axing of mature native trees, but did not pursue it at VCAT. Construction has not yet started.

North Entrance of the Zoo Car and Bus Park: Under the guise of implementing the Royal Park Master Plan, the COM, with the support of Greens Councillor Fraser Brindley, has revived the Zoo North Entrance car and bus parking project, designed first and foremost to serve Zoo visitors not park users. This project has been on the backburner for 10 years. This area of the Park was to have been a welcoming, revegetated oasis, part of the bush land park, with a bus turning circle (akin to that at the Zoo's main entrance) and some perimeter parking. Plans show that it has now turned into a \$3.6 million asphalt, supermarket-style car and bus park – Part III of the existing super-size carpark around the Zoo. The new plan is, in our view, patently unsafe as 3 roadways for buses and cars will cut across the pedestrian walkway, which runs diagonally across the carpark from Poplar Road just outside the Royal Park Station. Nothing is being done to reduce the large number of commuters parking here outside the Zoo walls. Nor has any attempt been made to charge users of the carparks or even to specify limited parking times. The question arises as to whether an area of Royal Park can be alienated for the specific use of the Zoo, a separate reservation. This and other questions will doubtless be raised at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) hearing commencing at 10 am on 9 July 2007. RPPG decided to appeal the decision of the COM to issue a planning permit for the "Zoo Northern Entry Upgrade" project. We engaged a barrister to assist us with the VCAT application and he will represent us at the hearing. This is a precedent setting case for Royal Park. We are calling on members to help stop the car invasion and to help preserve and protect Royal Park as our one and only City bushland park. Please donate even \$10 to help fund this VCAT case and we would be grateful if you could attend on the day to support us.



Name:

Contact: Phone:

Donations: \$10

\$20

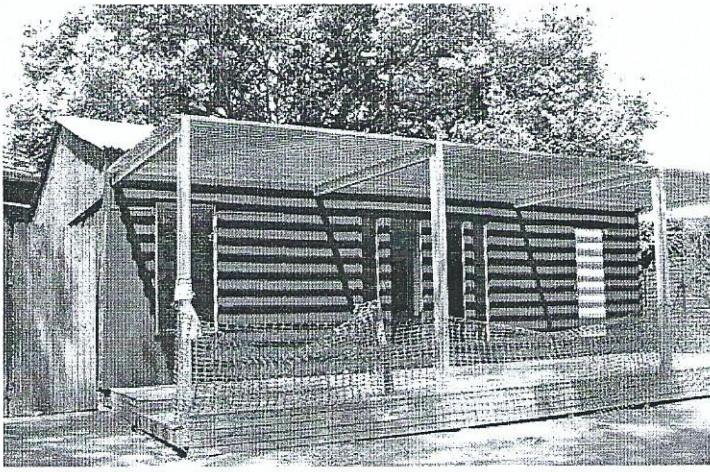
\$50

Address:

Email:

Other:

Make cheques out to: "The Royal Park Protection Group Fighting Fund" and send to RPPG at PO BOX 197 Parkville 3052 by early July or contribute at our 3 July 2007 members meeting. Alternately pay direct to our MECU account "Royal Park Protection Fighting Fund" BSB 803 140 Account No. 23145824. Enquiries MECU 132 888



Bizarre Heritage Happenings: New Extension to Walmsley House painted Crimson

Recently Heritage Victoria undertook the restoration of the historic 1850's prefabricated Walmsley House, home of Frances Meaker (first Park Ranger and Bailiff) and one of Victoria's oldest buildings. A verandah was added on the west side of the building but has unfortunately been painted bright red. It can be seen two kms away and has now been dubbed "The House of the Rising Sun." Heritage Victoria maintains that any additions to heritage buildings must be painted in a different colour to the original. We are told that the extension will be repainted in "Tropical Fruit Pink" a shade of burgundy! Are Heritage Victoria consultants "colour vision deficient"? Do they see red as green or grey?

Other Important Events and Action

"East-West Link Needs Assessment" by the Eddington Enquiry: Another freeway is being considered – yet again. Just when we thought that the Northern Central City Corridor Study had dispensed with the proposal for the Missing Link freeway/tunnel, it's on again! The State Government NCCCS Study, which ran for over two years from 2001 to 2003, at great public expense, rejected the proposal for an extension of the Eastern Freeway, as only 12.75 % of its traffic is headed west for City Link - most is headed for the City. At over \$1 billion cost it was not seen as economically viable. A recommendation was made for a rail line down the Eastern Freeway. (The model was taken from Perth - their new rail line has been a great success.) Alarm was raised at the last election over the prospects of the freeway extension as it was reported a freeway off ramp was being planned which would traverse the new wetlands in west Royal Park and impinge on the 20 hectare residential development The Parkville Gardens (rented out for the Commonwealth Games Village in March last year.) Sir Rod Eddington, a Bracks Government appointee, says that he is currently seeking ideas on what should be considered as part of this \$5 million traffic study - the "East-West Link Needs Assessment". (Also known as the "Eddington Enquiry.") RPPG will be making one by the due date, 31 May 2007, with the message - No Freeway/Tollway/Tunnel under, over or through Royal Park.

Threat of Drought to Royal Park and Other City Parks: Royal Park is drying up and trees are only being watered selectively. Back in November 2005 the City of Melbourne and City West Water had jointly proposed a "sewer-mining" project in Princes Park, which would have provided recycled A grade wastewater for Royal Park as well as city parks, the Melbourne Zoo and the University of Melbourne. The State and Federal Government have failed to come up with the funding to proceed with this project. RPPG made joint submissions with Protectors of Public Lands Victoria to the full COM Council meeting on 25 January 2007 - a Drought Emergency meeting - advocating that the Council pursue the sewer mining option and to Environment Committee meetings on 2 April 2007 and again on 3 April 2007 on sourcing waste water from sewers and storm water. The Lord Mayor has been to lobby Water Minister Thwaites but there has been no public comment. The waste water-sourcing issue has disappeared down a black hole.

Other Key Projects: The Royal Park Master Plan Implementation Advisory Committee, once effective under previous Councils, appears to us to have degenerated into a forum for special interest groups with Council support to push through pet projects. Foremost on the agenda, in addition to the Zoo northern entrance carparking project and the Urban Camp bus pull in bay, is expansion of the Royal Children's Hospital into Royal Park (now accomplished and construction about to commence); implementation of a network of asphalt commuter bike paths; and proposals to expand and relocate dog-off-lead areas, despite the fact there is no effective monitoring of dogs in the Park nor prosecution of offenders who are able to flout the laws with impunity and let dogs run free in on-lead areas, irrespective of wildlife.

Dates for Your Diary

COM World Environment Community Planting Day in Royal Park Sunday 3 June 2007

Time: 10 am to 1 pm. **BBQ:** Provided. **Date:** Sunday 3 June 2007. **Venue:** Skink Site in West Royal Park, approach via the Ross Straw Field, Oak Street, West Parkville (Melways 29 C 12). **Contact:** Gabrielle Stannus 9329 2801.

Royal Park Protection Group Members Meeting Tuesday 3 July 2007

Time: 7:30 pm to approx. 9 pm **Date:** Tuesday 3 July 2007. **Venue:** North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street, North Melbourne. **After:** Join us for a cup of tea. **Enquiries:** Julianne Bell, RPPG Convenor, on 98184114 or 0408022408.

RPPG VCAT Appeal on "Zoo Northern Entry Upgrade Project" 9 July 2007

Time: 10 am possibly for the whole day but please drop in any time to give us support. **Venue:** 55 King Street Melbourne (two buildings down from corner of Collins St.) Planning and Environment Section.