



Aerial View of Royal Park Showing Road Tunnels

Royal Park Protection Group Inc

Special News Bulletin July 2008 on the Eddington Report

What Can YOU Do To Stop Road Tunnels Destroying Royal Park?

The extension of the Eastern Freeway in tolled road tunnels through Royal Park was announced in Sir Rod Eddington's report on *"Investing in Transport - East West Link Needs Assessment"* released on 2 April 2008. The State Government then called for public submissions on the Report. The closing date is next Tuesday 5 July 2008. If you have not already done so, could you make a submission? To assist, we have drafted a proforma letter for you to send urgently. (See attached.)

Construction of Road Tunnels through Royal Park, as proposed in the Eddington Report, will devastate the Park and badly affect residential West Parkville. The Road Tunnel starts at Hoddle Street; goes under the Melbourne General Cemetery; and proceeds underground until it comes to the surface to form a T junction in Royal Park, adjacent to the State Netball and Hockey Centre (SNHC). This huge junction area will be a quarry for 5 to 10 years and, although said to be constructed by "cut and cover" methods may never be "covered" due to security concerns. The southern spur of the Tunnel heads south under Flemington Road, emerges in Holland Park in Kensington and exits at the Port of Melbourne. The northern spur carves its way through Royal Park sports grounds, wetlands and underground water storage areas and exits in the middle of CityLink. In the last ten years we have seen massive land grabs for the SNHC, the Games Village and, recently, the Royal Children's Hospital. Road Tunnels are the final nail in the Park's coffin. .

See above aerial photo with graphics drawn by Dr Jan Scheurer of RMIT. This is the only graphic representation to show exactly where the Road Tunnels with 4 lanes of traffic will go in Royal Park. (The Eddington Report's little line drawings fail to graphically present the reality and the enormity of this project.) The dotted lines represent tunnels with open cut-and-cover construction and the filled-in lines the underground tunnels. The fine lines represent walls or fences around exit and entry points and the one line to the south of the SNHC is a roadway needed to drive around the perimeter of the Road Tunnels junction.

Quotable quote: Roads Minister Tim Pallas is reported to have said at a meeting with the Kensington Association on 25 June 2008 that it was "not possible to construct major infrastructure without impacts, and that some had to be tolerated for the wider good". Are you willing to sacrifice Royal Park for Road Tunnels?

What's Been Happening?

The Royal Park Protection Group Inc. (RPPG) has been involved in the campaign to oppose Road Tunnels together with a number of other community organisations and political groups. These are (in alphabetical order): The Coalition of Residents and Business Associations – Melbourne (CORBA); Carlton Residents' Association; Flemington Association, Great Public Transport not a Tollway Tunnel and Freeway (a Western suburbs group); Greens (particularly MP's Greg Barber and Colleen Hartland); Kensington Association, Mount Alexander Road Campaign Group (MARCG); and Yarra Campaign Against Tunnels (YCAT).

Significant Recent Events in the Campaign Opposing Road Tunnels:

25 May: "No Tunnels" Rally at Debney's Park organised by RPPG and MARCG.
3 June: "No Tunnels" Rally outside Melbourne Town Hall prior to Planning Committee meeting.
18 June: Meeting of Western Suburbs groups in Footscray organised by Greens.
21 June: "Hands off Holland Park" Kensington Association Rally in JJ Holland Park, Kensington.
24 June: "No Tunnels" Rally outside the Melbourne Town Hall prior to the Council meeting.
4 July: Eastern Transport Alliance Forum at Manningham Council on Public Transport esp. rail.
5 July: "Climate Emergency Rally" City Square then march to Alexandra Gardens.

Coming Events:

Friday 11 July: The Premier is going "Live on Line" re Eddington Report. www.premier.vic.gov.au
Tuesday 15 July: D Day - Closing Date for Submissions to Eddington Review.
Tuesday 15 July: "No Tunnels" Rally outside Yarra Council Meeting 6:45 pm Fitzroy Town Hall.
Monday 4 August: Meeting Public Transport not Tunnels 7 pm 10 Hyde St. Footscray.

Other News;

Dispute over Commuter Cycle Path through Royal Park

The long saga of the cycle path proposed for the Park next to Macarthur Road ended at the Planning Committee meeting of 8 April 2008. The Committee decided as follows: "that the Planning Committee resolve to ... grant a Planning Permit for the construction of the shared path subject to conditions... to this report **keeping the pathway as close as possible to Macarthur Road with a minimum of three metres separation from the road without widening the path or decreasing the number of trees.**" Sounded clear enough to us. But we discovered that, over the long weekend in June, a path was being carved through the Park up to 17 metres away from Macarthur Road and that 23 trees were being felled. Correspondence ensued with the CEO, Councillors and Council officers and we were told that it was all a matter of "interpretation." Could have fooled us! It appears to us that Council staff call the shots at the Town Hall.

Dispute over Dogs-off-Leash in Royal Park

At a meeting of 8 July 2008 the Environment Committee of the City of Melbourne considered the proposed new areas for Dogs off Leash in Royal Park. Unfortunately Councillors appear to have been swayed by arguments put up by Minister Bronwyn Pike, Member for Melbourne and Patron of the Royal Park Dogs Group, and Minister Dick Wynne whose wife is a member of the Dogs Group. Thus means that an extensive area of parkland of high habitat value populated with ground nesting birds has been confirmed as a Dogs off Leash area. This threatens many species of birds documented recently in a professional birds' survey.

Another quotable quote: Minister Bronwyn Pike is reported to have said at a meeting with the Kensington Association on 25 June 2008 that she was: "*working assiduously with her Government colleagues to alert them to possible impacts of such a proposal (i.e. road tunnels) on Kensington and other parts of her constituency. It was not possible or practicable for her, as a Government Minister, to rule out any specific aspects of the Eddington proposals ... Rather, she believed that she was best able to serve her constituents by working 'from within', rather than by excluding herself from the process by prematurely condemning the proposal.*" (We have heard the self same words over the Games Village and the Royal Children's Hospital)

RPPG acknowledges that this bulletin was produced with assistance of a grant by the City of Melbourne