

Royal Park Protection Group



Royal Park Protection Group Inc

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL PARK PROTECTION GROUP (RPPG) GIVEN AT THE AGM ON 14th OCTOBER 2020

Over the last year, RPPG has been involved in a number of issues as outlined below:

Activities over the past year included:

- Landcare 30 year Celebration – attended
Landcare planting for Honda. Supervision supplied with F of RP This earned us \$3,000. With this money we have joined with F of RP to purchase a new projector for presentations at our meetings.
- **Pavilion Upgrades**
 - We attended initial meetings with CoM re the Brens, Ryder and Western Oval sporting pavilions
 - Firm designs were to have been ready by February however this has all been postponed.
- Completed design for **new Logo** for RPPG plus printing of “cards”
- **Lighting of Bike Paths** – we attended on site meetings to discuss the issue of lighting and safety whilst maintaining a dark park. (especially near the Orygen site on the Capital City Trail). Final outcome still pending.
- **RCH Helipad** – Demolition is not planned. We will be writing to CoM to put on record that the original agreement by the parties was for this to be removed.
- **Overshadowing Policy Review Amdt C278** – submission made. The hearings have been delayed until October due to virus restrictions.
- **Changes to tramstops within park** – this was to allow longer trams to be used on the route. Very little impact foreseen. However this did lead on to discussion about pedestrian safety at the tram/train to Zoo area.
- **Archiving of Records** – we are trying to find a repository for our records and are currently waiting on word from the State Library
- **Orygen** – works by Orygen cleared a bed of bushes and removed a fence. We have been asking for this to be reinstated. Response from CoM is that new path will be built at Orygen expense and a safety study to be done on cycling-pedestrian interaction.

- **Wetlands Pollution** – The Wetlands were drained and replanted in February. Unfortunately the windmills to deter the birds failed so netting had to be introduced. Note - Melbourne Water confirmed clean up occurs monthly on the edges and on water on an as needed basis. They were happy for us to advise them if/when litter is excessive and needs further input.
- **Gardens for Wildlife Pilot Program (CoM)** – there was a volunteer meet and greet invitation in March for this program that is trying to increase the native plantings in private gardens of all sizes including balconies. This is aimed at supporting insects, birds and wildlife in general in the city. Pilot program is hoping to lead to the establishment of a local group similar to others across Melbourne. Anne Phefley is taking part in the pilot program.
- **Zoo Carparking** – nothing has progressed on this matter. Discussions have focussed on refuting projected growth figures and the promotion of public transport. Actuals were made available in March 19 and showed a much reduced growth in numbers to the projected figures.
- **Zoo Floodlights** – The Zoo installed extensive floodlighting on the southern perimeter for staff safety. They are very intrusive. A complaint was made and the Zoo have now been forced to apply for permits to which we have lodged objections. Still pending.
- **CoM Transport Study** – Published September 2019. This is looking at access, use of space and severance and we understand was initiated by the Zoo and Sports Clubs as they are pushing for more parking. This covers roads, public transport, bike paths and parking in the park. The aim of the study is to “reduce severance; release space and increase access; increase the coherence of the Park especially the Australian landscape”. We are concerned that passive users seem to have been missed in the assessment which may skew the results. The CoM presentation may be accessed on the website.
- Along with Protectors of Public Lands, F of RP we are asking the Council to provide a safe crossing from the tram and train at the back of the zoo.
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Grants

- We are pleased to announce that through the help of Adam Bandt’s office we have been granted \$12,041 to be spent on
 - Extensive replantings at the Bren’s Remnant Area
 - Creation of a “Walking Tour App” for Royal Park.
- We have placed an order for plants after consultation with Chris Nicholson
- Royal Park during restrictions
 - It has been good to see so many people using the park for recreation. Hopefully they will come to love and appreciate it.
 - However some people are not taking care of the park at all. Riding through garden beds, cutting new tracks off paths, picking flowers, breaking off wattle branches. Dogs off leash in sensitive areas.
 - Hopefully this behaviour can be discouraged.
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Meetings – the General Meeting in March was cancelled due to the lockdown

Community Involvement:

- Short working bees are now occurring every third Wednesday of the month with park officer Chris Nicholson and Friends of Royal Park. We meet at Walmsley House at 10am for a 2 hour session. Everyone is welcome to attend Just prior to restrictions the frequency was increased as the weeds are growing so quickly and many plants need to be freed from their protective sleeves.
- RPPG was involved in Bat Bioblitz; Unfortunately the planned session about the microbats had to be cancelled. We hope to reschedule this for 2021
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We would also encourage members to report hazards/suspicious behaviour to Council. We had instances of fireworks being let off prior to Christmas – a fire hazard!

Website/Facebook: We hope that this has been of use to people as a repository of information on the park as well as highlighting activities. If you have any suggestions for improvements please let us know.

Royal Park Cards

We wish to thank our Committee member Margaret Jungwirth for all the effort put in to prepare cards which have been a great hit with the community at large. Thank you to Lynne Oliver, Michele Summerton and Mary Kamat for helping with the market stall. We are grateful to Parkville Post Office for stocking our cards. and Mary Kamat for helping with the market stall.

We would also like to give a special thankyou to Anne Phefley, our Secretary for all the work she does in organising us, the events, the catering and just about everything else!

I would like to end by thanking all our RPPG members, friends and allies for their continued support and assistance over the years with all the hard work involved in rallies, protests, blockades, publicity stunts, attending meetings and keeping the Government and Council under constant surveillance .

As usual I will end with a well known quote from Patrick White at a 1972 Rally, Centennial Park, Sydney.

"Your parks are your breathing spaces. Guard them, cherish them. 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."

Paul Leitinger Convenor Royal Park Protection Group October 2020