

*Royal Park Protection Group Inc*

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Friday 2 June 2006**

**BELLBIRD BUNGLE MAY SPOIL PREMIER'S WETLANDS LAUNCH**

The Premier is to launch the Royal Park Wetlands at 12 noon on Sunday 4 June 2006. The State Government is involved as it contributed \$5 million to the Wetlands development before the 2006 Commonwealth Games. They were meant to be finished completely to enhance the next-door Athletes' Village in time for the Games. The Melbourne City Council is responsible for the project and for naming it. Lord Mayor John So said last week that he consulted the Wurundgeri Tribe Land Culture and Heritage Council over naming the Wetlands "*Bellbird Waterhole*" and in having the name translated into an Aboriginal language.

Julianne Bell Convenor of the Royal Park Protection Group (RPPG) explains why community groups and residents are disgusted over the naming of this important project:

*"The choice of the name "Bellbird" by Lord Mayor So is completely ludicrous. The problem is there are no Bellbirds in West Royal Park - never have been, never will be. It simply is not their habitat. Bellbirds (Bell miners to use their proper name) do not live in Wetlands – full stop. Second problem - the wetland is not a "waterhole" which is associated more with artesian springs in arid lands or with deep pools in flowing creeks and rivers. And third - the Melbourne Council's translation of the name is said to be wrong. The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Language has translated the name as "Trian - warreen Tam - boore" (not "Tria Warren Tam-boore"). The choice of name "Bellbird Waterhole" reveals gross ignorance of Royal Park and its wildlife. Community groups on Melbourne Council's Royal Park Master Plan Advisory Committee were not consulted over naming of the Wetlands. Had we been, this triple bungle might have been averted."*

Rod Quantock, Deputy Convenor of RPPG and well-known satirist, commented: *"Next Sunday the Premier will be opening a fast food restaurant for the multitude of foxes which roam Royal Park. The City of Melbourne refused to fence the Wetlands and to secure nesting sites to protect the Wetland birds expected to live here. At the moment, the most significant thing about this \$5 million bird sanctuary is the singular lack of wildlife-if you don't count the seagulls."*

The Royal Park Protection Group is advocating that the embarrassing name "*Bellbird Waterhole*" and its erroneous translation be scrapped, that the signs be removed in time for the Premier's launch on Sunday and that we revert to the name commonly used - "*The Royal Park Wetlands*".

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