



Tunnel Vent Stack

Royal Park Protection Group Inc

News Bulletin – April 2008

EAST-WEST TUNNEL SPELLS DESTRUCTION FOR ROYAL PARK AND INNER CITY SUBURBS

The extension of the Eastern Freeway in a tolled road tunnel under Royal Park was announced in the release of the Sir Rod Eddington's "East West Link Needs Assessment" report on 2 April 2008.

This was an inauspicious day given that an intense storm hit Melbourne. Was this an omen from the Gods? The Royal Park Protection Group Inc. and community groups in Kensington featured in the Age on 3 April 2008 as "the losers" in the article on The Tunnel "\$18 bn to link east and west". See also article in the Age of Saturday 26 April "500 properties face demolition".

We now know as far as Royal Park is concerned:

- That the Tunnel will go underground from Hoddle Street, Clifton Hill and that there will NOT be any outlets to the city until the Flemington Road/Racecourse Road/Mt Alexander Road/City Link/Elliott Avenue intersection and then there won't be a turn off until Footscray or possibly Sunshine. This is despite the fact that only 7% of car traffic is headed east-west and 8% of truck traffic. Most traffic is headed to and from the City. (The State Government's Northern Central City Corridor Study 2001 to 2003 produced these figures and came to the conclusion that extension of the Eastern Freeway westwards was not needed.) Experts say that pressure from big business and city will force the Government to introduce outlets to the city with on-off ramps at intersections on the way, namely at Nicholson Street and/or Lygon Street and/or Rathdowne Street and/or Royal Parade.
- There will be a huge spaghetti interchange at the Flemington Road/City Link etc. intersection with flyovers and on/off ramps across West Parkville residential area including the Parkville Gardens residential development and the Royal Park Wetlands and, possibly, Travancore Park on the other side of City Link.
- There will be a "tunnel staging point" in West Royal Park close to Flemington Road which will result in a giant quarry alienating public parkland and destroying carefully re-established indigenous vegetation. Another "tunnel staging point" will be located at the J.J. Holland Park in Kensington and will also effectively turn that park into a quarry.
- The whole exercise for the road tunnel, originally costed at \$1 billion, is now up to \$10 billion. The bets are on that the Government will regard Royal Park as disposable and, in a "cost saving" measure; the extension of the Eastern Freeway will be in an open cut motorway through the Park, not underground in a tunnel. (Several years ago under Bracks a leaked Cabinet document advised that the Tunnel would extend under the cemetery then only up to the entrance to Royal Park, after Royal Parade it would be a roadway.)
- The Tunnel comes with huge vent stacks belching pollution up to 12 storeys high which will mark the path of the Tunnel. See the photo taken by Jill Quirk of the Burnley Tunnel vent stack next to the Malthouse Theatre in South Melbourne. One or more such vent stacks will be located in Royal Park polluting the Park and nearby institutions, for instance Royal Children's Hospital. In addition they will be a major security hazard given that they can be easily scaled and interfered with. (Security costs have not been included as far as we know.)

The Tunnel will be the killer blow for Royal Park after the recent alienation of public parkland for the State Netball and Hockey Centre, the Games Village (alias a real estate development) and the Royal Children's Hospital (see the new quarry on Flemington Road for the new and expanded Hospital buildings) plus other sundry pieces of infrastructure such as the new super market style carpark at the North Entrance to the Zoo; commuter bike paths; and a new cycle bridge over Manningham Street West Parkville with bright red iron struts designed in the new "brutalism" style of architecture.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY PROTEST TO SAY "NO" TO THE TUNNEL & TRAVANCORE DEVELOPMENT AT 1 PM ON SUNDAY 25 MAY 2008 DEBNEY'S PARK FLEMINGTON

Reason to Protest: The proposed developments will clog the roads around Flemington, West Parkville, North Melbourne, Ascot Vale and Kensington and destroy public parkland notably Royal Park. Specifically: (1) The Tunnel will have a major interchange undoubtedly in the form of a spaghetti junction at Flemington Rd, Racecourse Rd and CityLink; a flyover across West Parkville residential area plus Royal Park and possibly across Travancore Park; and consume parts of Royal Park West and Holland Park in Kensington as staging points for tunnel construction. Vent stacks will be situated along the route of the tunnel. (2) The Travancore 22 story Office/Apartment Development and 1,000 vehicle carpark will cause even greater traffic congestion in and around the southern part of Mt. Alexander Rd and will also consume 2,000 sq meters of Debney's Park.

Taken together with the failure to make major improvements in public transport they will lead to an urban nightmare for the residents of five Melbourne suburbs and loss of significant parkland.

Time and Date: 1 pm Sunday May 25 2008 **Location:** Debney's Park, Mt Alexander Rd next to the Flemington Community Centre. **Key Speaker:** Dr Paul Mees – our public transport guru **MC:** Rod Quantock

Themes: Say "no" to John Brumby and the Big End of Town's urban nightmare; oppose more loss of public parkland; demand real solutions to our traffic and public transport problems and real action on Global Warming.

Transport: Train - Flemington Bridge Station Upfield Line. **Tram** - No 59 up Mt Alexander Road from Elizabeth Street that drops you off at Tram stop 23 next to the Flemington Community Centre or No 57 up Racecourse Road and walk north through "Housing Commission" grounds. **Bike:** Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. **Parking:** Outside Flemington Community Centre (limited); Victoria Street - first left after Debney's Park and walk back across sports fields; parking areas of "Housing Commission" flats on Racecourse Road entrance and walk across. Melways Map Reference: 43B1

Principal organizing groups: Mt Alexander Rd Campaign Group (MARCG) and Royal Park Protection Group Inc. (RPPG) with the support of Protectors of Public Lands Victoria Inc. (a coalition of over 80 environment, heritage and community groups.) **Contacts:** Julianne Bell RPPG 9818 4114 or 0408022408 jbell5@bigpond.com or Gab Pretto MARCG on 0411060059 stoptrafficedisaster@live.com.au.

OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR ROYAL PARK

Dogs-Off-Leash in Royal Park: In an apparent turn-around Councillor Fraser Brindley, who chairs the Royal Park Master Plan Implementation Advisory Committee, agreed to our demands re proposals for dogs off the leash areas (a previously controversial subject) : (1) Dogs off leash have now been removed from significant habitat areas of the Park and have been restricted to (a) Poplar Road Sports Ground (b) Flemington Road Sports ground plus a section of parkland (c) Macpherson Field, which has always been a Dogs-off-Leash area. (2) RPPG suggested that all areas of water with water birds (a) the Australian Native Garden (b) the west Billabong as well as (c) Wetlands in West Royal Park be made "dogs prohibited." (3) As a concession to dog walkers RPPG suggested that sports' ovals should be made into dogs-off-lead zones unless sport is in progress. Councillor Brindley suggested that one sports field on the Ross Straw Field to cater for dog walkers in West Parkville; one sports oval on Park Street to cater for Brunswick dog walkers; and one on The Avenue to cater for dog walkers in Parkville be made available.

The revised proposal will be put to the City of Melbourne Environment Committee on Tuesday 6 May 2008. RPPG would appreciate it if members could attend the meeting to show support.

Commuter Bike Path Through Royal Park: The final hearing of the planning permit to approve a commuter bike path through Royal Park close to the Burke and Wills memorial and its planted surrounds and through a Conservation 1 area was held on Tuesday 8 April 2008 at the City of Melbourne Planning Committee meeting. (It was due to be decided under delegation by a staff member but RPPG approached Councillors to call it in and have it heard at a Council Committee. It was then deferred so the Royal Park Master Plan Committee could discuss it.) There was a partial victory as following intensive lobbying Councillors voted 5 to 1 at the Planning Committee on 8 April 2008 to amend the original design and to construct the path close to the road not through the Park. This good result was due to a unified approach by RPPG, the Nth & West Melb.Assoc. and the Burke and Wills Society.

ENCLOSED IS A MEMBERSHIP FORM 2008 TO 2009 – WE NEED YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

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