

Royal Park Protection Group Inc.

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News Bulletin

September 2000

THE ROYAL PARK

Still a Bushland Haven in Melbourne City?

THREATS CONTINUE FROM GAMES STADIUMS & VILLAGE

The full impact of the construction in Royal Park of the 2006 Commonwealth Games Hockey and Netball Stadiums – alias the State Hockey and Netball Centre (SNHC) - is now evident. It bears little relation to the decorative sketches sent out by the Kennett spin doctors when the project was first announced. In place of prime parkland with groves of mature eucalypts, where we once had peaceful picnics, we now have a massive, grey, concrete building - a cross between a Myer-Chadstone type shopping complex and a penitentiary, surrounded with light towers and asphalt car parks and set behind high wire fences. Positioned on one of the highest points of Melbourne, the fourteen light towers of this monstrous complex are visible from many kilometres around.

The last three months have seen dramatic developments in the ongoing battle by members and friends of the Royal Park Protection Group (RPPG) who are endeavouring:

- to halt the environmental degradation of Royal Park, the Zoo and surrounding residential suburbs by the SNHC stadiums and to save what trees remain on the site itself
- to avert potential traffic and road hazards from the massive lighting installations on the SNHC
- to avoid the Park being turned into a giant car park for SHNC visitors
- to shield the SNHC lights to help halt the incremental obliteration of our night skies

- to have the Games Village located elsewhere, not on the Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital site, and to save the National Trust classified Hospital buildings.

Reference articles enclosed - "Spotlight on the Zoo" (September 2000 edition "North Melbourne News") and "Leaked Report Queries Site of Games Village" (Sunday Age of 17 September 2000).

Sayings of Chairman Ron

"Not one tree will be removed or one inch of parkland lost." On construction of the 2006 Commonwealth Games Netball/Hockey stadiums, Royal Park (March 1999)

"I believe I have an understanding with the Premier that Parkville will be the preferred site" On the location of the Games Village on Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital site, Parkville (May 2000)

"Melbourne will get a bigger bang for its buck" On the announcement that Premier Bracks had extended the Grand Prix contract to 2010 (July 2000)

What's been happening since June ?

- RPPG is represented on two standing committees which meet once a month or so (1) The City of Melbourne Royal Park Master Plan Implementation Committee, plus a sub committee to supervise the planting, revegetation and maintenance of Royal Park (2) The State Sports' Centres Trust Advisory Committee on the State Netball and Hockey Centre. (A RPPG motto is "*if you can't beat them join them*" – at least we know what's going on)
- In early July meetings with lawyers were held to discuss the option of taking enforcement action over apparently illegal lighting installations and construction work on the SNHC site. This was with a view to halting construction of light towers until lights were fitted with protective shields
- On 19 July a meeting was held with Major Projects Minister Pandazopoulos together with Dean Mighell, Secretary, Electrical Trades Union (ETU) to ask for the stadiums lights to be fitted with protective shields to prevent light spill and consequent environmental ill effects and to implement an environmental effects statement. (These requests were refused by the Minister)
- Over the weekend of the 22 and 23 July the SNHC hockey stadium light towers were erected, the work accelerated possibly to ensure that RPPG did not take out an enforcement order to stop construction. RPPG held a protest on the Sunday morning - 23 July - over this environmental vandalism of the Bracks Government
- On 8 August Barry Clark made a submission to the City of Melbourne's Environment Committee on the new "City Lighting Strategy" and on "SNHC Lighting"
- On 9 August Barry Clark, Julianne Bell and Mary Keogh briefed Minister Bronwyn Pike (Member for Melbourne) and Glenyys Romanes MLC on developments relating to the stadiums and Village in Royal Park
- On 24 August Bob Symington, Director of "Green Games Watch 2000" (Sydney) visited Melbourne and was taken on a tour by RPPG members of 2006 Commonwealth Games venues
- On 30 August RPPG representatives attended the Royal Park Master Plan Implementation Committee meeting to discuss the Brens Pavilion "development" (ie the proposal by City of Melbourne staff to alienate *more parkland* for carparks and access roads for sporting groups use)
- On 4 September RPPG followed up our nomination of the Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital heritage buildings to the Register of the National Estate with a new submission on threats to the heritage buildings
- On 5 September the Parkville Association, with RPPG support, passed a resolution calling for the State Member for Melbourne to convene an information forum on the Games Village proposals
- On 5 September RPPG made two submissions on the "SNHC Stadium Lights" and on "Carparking in Royal Park" to the City of Melbourne's Environment Committee
- On 21 September information was received that the SNHC lights are being trialled by the electrical contractors who have already admitted the spill and glare exceed acceptable limits. RPPG and the ASV, also trade unions, have asked to be present at full scale trials and are urging members to attend. See below under What's On.

"It's a bodgie report...we've been stooged " Dean Mighell, ETU Secretary on the SNHC Lighting Report by a commercial lighting company, commissioned by Planning Minister Thwaites, which led to the Government amending the Melbourne Planning Scheme and approving the stadium lighting.

What's On?

IMPORTANT – A *public gathering* will be held at the State Netball and Hockey Centre, Brens Drive, Royal Park to witness *the trial of the stadium lighting*. SNHC lights are to be switched on at night time possibly around 8 pm one evening during the week of Monday 25 September. Date and time to be advised. RPPG and ASV members will be attending, also trade union representatives.

Monday 25 September: Royal Park Protection Group Members' Meeting: 730 pm at North Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne. All welcome.

Wednesday 27 September: 3CR 855 AM Community Radio 9 am "City Limits" People's Committee for Melbourne Program. Julianne Bell (RPPG) and Royce Millar (Age journalist) to be interviewed on the 2006 Commonwealth Games Village.

Saturday 21 October: Spring Planting along the railway cutting in West Royal Park (enter by the Manningham Street sports ground). The afternoon is being run by the City of Melbourne, Excel (Park supervisors) and Greening Australia. Time 1pm to 5pm. Afternoon tea provided by Flemington Rotary Club. Bring your gardening gloves!

Sunday 22 October: Annual North Melbourne Multicultural "Spring Fling" at North Melbourne Town Hall. 12 noon to 5 pm. As in previous years, RPPG will have a stall – this time it will be in the Town Hall. Volunteers needed to help at stall (even for an hour) and recruit new members

IMPORTANT - *Monday 30 October:* RPPG 2000 Annual General Meeting 7:30 pm at the North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street North Melbourne. Guest speaker: Mr Bob Symington, Director, "Green Games Watch 2000" has been invited to speak on "Green Games for Melbourne in 2006". Greg Thorpe, Royal Park Native Vegetation Supervisor, is to speak on "The Greening of Royal Park"

Enquiries: contact Julianne Bell on 9818 4114 or 0408022408.

Membership Renewals

Important - we need financial assistance to help fight our battles! If you have not done so, could you renew your 200/2001 membership? Another membership form is included overleaf to fill in and forward to the above address. RPPG has not raised its fees since being established in 1996 – even with the GST! Members with email please include the address.

Thought for the day "*The golden rule is - whoever has the gold makes the rules.*" (The King in the Wizard of Id cartoon strip)

ROYAL PARK PROTECTION GROUP INC

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

1 JULY 2000 – 30 JUNE 2001

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....Post Code.....

Phone:(H)..... (W).....

Fax..... Email.....

.. members @ \$10 each (\$5 conc.) plus donation..... total \$.....

Cheque enclosed for \$..... Please send receipt: Circle Yes No

Note: It was decided to set the renewal date at 1 July instead of individual dates.

Objectives of RPPG:

In accordance with our Constitution, members are asked to sign agreement with RPPG objectives which are:

(1) To protect, regenerate and conserve the Royal Park as a unique, indigenous, central city park for present and future generations, consistent with the principles of the 1987 Royal Park Master Plan;

(2) To oppose alienation of parkland by government, commercial, sporting and other bodies to ensure public access consistent with the terms of the establishment of the Royal Park.

I hereby agree to the objectives of the Royal Park Protection Group Inc

Signed:

.....Date:.....

Telephone Tree:

RPPG has an extensive telephone network to keep members informed of activities. Would you like to be advised of our events, meetings, protest activities etc? Circle Yes No

Royal Park Protection Group Inc

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