

16 February 2009

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
Level 6, 8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne 3002

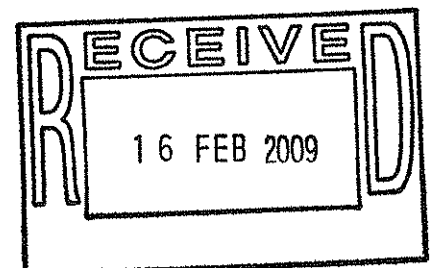
VEAC Investigation into Crown Land

We have resided in East Melbourne for 15 years and believe we are fortunate to live in an area of magnificent gardens and trees, thanks to the careful planning and thought spanning several decades.

For the past 5 or more years, we have been saddened by the impact of the drought and vandalism on our parks and trees. We walk through the Treasury and Fitzroy gardens to and from work every day, we go to the football, tennis, events and we run in the mornings and walk through Yarra Park at least twice a week. We have seen the trees damaged and just recently lost a tree immediately across the road due to the drought and lack of care.

Yarra Park is used by residents to play with their children, walk their dogs, exercise in the open air, spend time with their families and we often see the bbqs and picnic areas in use in the evenings when we walk through the park. Most recently part of the park has been used for tennis parking and the damage from erosion when the park is so dry and barren, is horrendous. We saw people leaving their empty drink bottles on the ground in the park as they left the area, and rubbish is frequently left on the ground, let alone the damage caused by the cars and foot traffic from these events.

The speed at which the people drive on the once grassed dirt is unnecessary and damaging. This speed increases as they hit the bitumen paths and is a danger to pedestrians. The parking attendants pay little if any attention to these behavioural issues, and there is no policing of this parking.



We are extremely concerned for the future of our trees and parks, we have enjoyed the foresight and planning of the generations before us in planting and maintaining a wonderful "green" environment, and we will be ashamed to leave nothing behind. We make the following points:

- Little or nothing has been done to water or maintain the trees for the past 5 years during the drought.
- No control is exercised over the management or encouraging people to "care" about our trees and parklands.
- On a recent trip to New York and a tour of Central Park, we learned that each tree is registered and monitored. A central register of every tree is kept and details of the tree are recorded by the park rangers.
- We would happily sponsor a tree and pay for the ongoing upkeep and maintenance.
- People need parks and trees and greenery in their lives, especially as we have more people living in the city and children don't have backyards to play in and enjoy the outdoors.
- With no greenery or environment for people to enjoy, it only encourages children (and families) to spend a life inside playing computer games or watching television.
- Little replanting has been done to compensate for the loss of our trees which has already commenced.
- As a child living in the outer suburbs, I can recall visits to the city to visit the Fairy Tree, the Model Tudor Village, waiting in the Fitzroy Gardens when visiting grand parents in hospital, picnics in the park or on the banks of the Yarra at Moomba, before the circus or a show – we didn't have to park close to the city – we actually "walked" from the car as a family!
- The events at Yarra Park are all well serviced by public transport and we should be encouraging increasing and improving our public transport systems.

We urge you to consider the importance of retaining the parks and gardens for the current and future generations, and the consequences of allowing these environments to continue to deteriorate and eventually disappear completely. It would be great to see the council and government undertake an awareness campaign for the public so that they understand the damage that has occurred and continues to occur so that they can appreciate the need to protect Yarra Park.

We don't park our cars next to the Myer Music Bowl or in the Botanic Gardens. If we want to walk around Albert Park Lake, we park our cars and walk. Why can't we park and walk to the MCG, Rod Laver Arena and other events?

It's time to imagine a city without parks and trees, and take action now so that never becomes reality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sandra & Laurie Fenton