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Subject Submission to VEAC Investigation of Crown land and public authority land in metropolitan Melbourne

We should like to make a personal submission to the above inquiry. Our submission relates solely to Yarra Park in East Melbourne.

Yarra Park's capacity to continue to be a community, metropolitan and national asset is continually compromised by its periodic use as a car park for events at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, under an agreement which expires in 2010. Each year the results of car parking have to be remedied by re-turfing and repairing damage to grass and trees. The practice of allowing parking has exacerbated the stress caused by the recent severe drought such that the Park is now in a depleted, unattractive and ecologically marginal state. It's historic status cannot be removed; its value as an amenity to residents and visitors has all but been destroyed.

From the point of view of restoring that amenity the best solution would be not to renew the car parking agreement after 2010: the closure of the Park to cars during the Commonwealth Games is a precedent. Public transport services (train, tram and bus) would need expansion, and controls over parking in nearby streets strengthened.

A compromise proposal, which would retain the capacity for limited parking, thus retaining access for spectators who come from parts of Melbourne not readily accessible by public transport, and reducing pressure on nearby streets, would be to construct a proper car park, involving some underground and limited overground storeys, in a part of the Park already compromised. A possible site would be on the area currently assigned to MCG members' parking, south of Jolimont Street, perhaps with access off Brunton Avenue. Other sites could be identified which would have the least effect on the overall amenity and easiest access.

The current car parking agreement allows for up to 5700 cars. A single car park could not replace all this but, allied with additional public transport and controls over street parking, would seem to us a reasonable compromise.

Stuart and Sue Hamilton
