

Metropolitan Melbourne



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No: 107

Subject submission to metropolitan Melbourne investigation

Liz Buckley's submission.



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Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation

Born and bred in Melbourne, I would like to add my personal views on the use of public land. I have been a resident of Bayside for 18 years and have lived near Port Phillip Bay for most of my life. I believe that, not only Bayside but anywhere, no matter how small, where the original environment of Melbourne and its surrounds can be preserved, is important and essential in maintaining the wellbeing of its citizens. We are caretakers, if you like, of what once was and still remains a reminder of the world beyond urbanisation.

I would like the Council to consider four places of special significance to me and my family – Cheltenham Park, Braeside Park, Edithvale-Seaford Wetland, the remnants of bushland around the coastal strip of Port Phillip Bay.

1. Cheltenham Park

I am aware that this small section of native bush beside Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery is administered by Bayside Council and that a Management Plan for it was produced some years ago with strong input from the community to retain its 'wild' characteristics. To be in this place is to have respite from the pressures of life, in spite of the hum of the Nepean Highway nearby and the rattle of the trains. Cheltenham Park needs to be retained in its 'natural' form.

2. Braeside Park

As with Cheltenham Park, there appears to be no threat to this park's existence. However, it does cover a large tract of land; big enough to imagine being far away in the bush. The DSE and Melbourne Water should resist any suggestions of siphoning off any of it for development.

3. Edithvale- Seaford Wetland

It would seem that as an internationally important RAMSAR site and under the care of Melbourne Water, this wetland would be well-supported and maintained. As a volunteer manning its bird-hide from time to time, I can attest to the growing interest of the public in the lives of the birds, not just bird-watchers but parents with young children. However, the promised Discovery Centre has not materialised; and just this week 25 dead swans were found at the wetland, apparently killed by foxes or dogs, indicating an urgent need to secure the boundaries.

4. The remnant bush strips along the coast of Port Phillip Bay

Hampton, Sandringham, Ricketts Point, Beaumaris, Mentone, Parkdale, Mordialloc, a gap then Seaford, Frankston, and down the Bay – all of these beaches are fringed by scrub. Regeneration has occurred in some parts.

I am most familiar with the section from Middle Brighton to Mentone (the bottom of Charman Rd) and the Seaford and Rye foreshores. The coast walking path from Hampton to Beaumaris is used by many people. From time to time tree vandals attempt in their eyes to improve the view; calls are made to thin the undergrowth to discourage flashers. Yet this narrow strip hangs on. I have seen Bayside Council's strategy for protecting and preserving the beachfront and have noted that cliff erosion and remnant vegetation are included as in need of urgent attention, so I shouldn't feel as concerned for its future as I do when walking there; but, to my untutored eye the drought seems to have devastated our coastal strip and the whole area looks stressed and struggling to

survive. With increased use, the impact of litter and dog turds cannot be discounted. And, it seems that although the coastal area has high priority in planning, the pace of change is slow.

I feel hesitant to submit this document because it is clear that councils and government bodies have strategies in place to manage and preserve these four areas. And these places also have Friends of... community groups who work to preserve them. Nevertheless, their intrinsic worth to us needs to be reiterated to ensure that they survive into the future.

A worthwhile initiative for the Council would be to recommend regular and sufficient funding for these groups so that they can get on with the business of protection; as well as identifying perhaps a single authority responsible for these little oases in the urban landscape which a) can ensure that they are cared for and not constantly shifted to the bottom of the list of priorities; and b) can develop a unified strategy for the whole of Melbourne.

Liz Buckley