



"Glen Canty"

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To <veac@dse.vic.gov.au>

cc

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Subject Submission to Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation

Metropolitan Melbourne

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No:

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Please find attached a submission to the VEAC Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation from Mr Warran Brown, Chief Executive of the Melbourne Racing Club.

Regards,

Glen Canty

Business Affairs Manager | Corporate Services



Melbourne Racing Club

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MRC - Submission to VEAC Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation Feb 2009.pdf

16 February 2009

Mr Duncan Malcolm
Chairman
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

Via email: veac@dse.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Malcolm

METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE INVESTIGATION - CAULFIELD RACECOURSE RESERVE

The Melbourne Racing Club is proud of its shared history with the Glen Eira community. The Club would like to share with you our vision for the public open space of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve, a safe and accessible area where we can all enjoy walking, fishing, jogging or just take some time out to appreciate the natural environment in conjunction with thoroughbred racing and training activities.

In 2008, agreement was reached with the City of Glen Eira to include some exciting initiatives which will see the centre of the course enhanced for the greater benefit of the community, and new signs highlighting access and welcoming visitors to the Reserve were installed at all entrances.

In a further boost to the community, plans have recently been unveiled for a proposed new public park in Glen Eira on land currently owned by the Melbourne Racing Club. The proposed park, which will provide additional opportunities for passive recreation, will be created as an outcome of a land exchange between the Melbourne Racing Club and the Crown in a process managed and facilitated by the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

The Club understands that Caulfield Racecourse Reserve is the only racecourse in Victoria which is required by a crown grant to satisfy anything but a racing purpose, and the developments outlined in the enclosed submission highlight that the intent of the crown grant is being comfortably met.

The Club looks forward to continuing to work with the Trustees, Glen Eira Council and the community so that all parties may share in the benefits the Reserve has to offer.

Yours sincerely

Warran Brown
Chief Executive



1. Caulfield Racecourse Reserve



Aerial photograph of Caulfield Racecourse Reserve.

1.1 Reservation of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve

In 1858, a Crown Grant provided for a "...site for a racecourse public recreation ground and public park at Caulfield...".

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve was permanently reserved from sale and established as a "...site for Racing Recreation and Public Park purposes" by Order of the Governor in Council on 6 October 1879 and published in the Government Gazette on 10 October 1879.

Crown Grant Volume 7275 Folio 814 dated 7 July 1949 refers to the establishment of a "...site for a racecourse public recreation ground and public park...".

1.2 Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Governance

The Reserve is governed by 15 Trustees of whom six are nominated by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, six represent the Melbourne Racing Club, and three represent the City of Glen Eira (but only so long as they continue to be Councillors).

Appointments to the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust are made by the Governor in Council and only take effect once published in the Victorian Government Gazette.

1.3 Lease of the Reserve to the Melbourne Racing Club

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve is leased to the Melbourne Racing Club in accordance with provisions of Section 22 of the Crown Land Reserves Act (1978). The leasing process is managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and leases are subject to Governor in Council approval and involve rental payments to the Trustees on commercial terms.

Trustees and the Club are also parties to a Deed of Maintenance and Development in which the Trustees have agreed that the Club must maintain and develop the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve in accordance with the requirements of the Trustees.

2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Melbourne Racing Club

2.1 Overview

The Melbourne Racing Club (previously the Victoria Amateur Turf Club) is a not-for-profit club established in 1875. The purposes of the Club are to conduct thoroughbred horse race meetings at Caulfield Racecourse, Sandown Racecourse and such other locations as the Committee may from time to time determine, and to conduct any other business or activity that the Committee may from time to time consider to be of financial or other benefit to the Club.

In accordance with provisions of Section 13 of the Crown Land Reserves Act (1978), Trustees of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve have made certain regulations for and with respect to the Reserve. The Club's responsibilities include (but are not limited to) care and maintenance of the entire reserve on behalf of the Trustees under a deed of maintenance. Under the terms of the deed, the Club must conduct maintenance and development at its own risk. The Club provides releases and indemnities in favour of the Trustees in that regard.

The Deed further states that the Club must observe all relevant public safety standards in performing Maintenance and Development.

2.2 Risk Management

The activities within the centre of the Caulfield Racecourse include thoroughbred horse training (seven days per week all year round), horse racing, controlled riding for the disabled, training and racing area preparation (maintenance & heavy vehicle movements), car parking for race days and events, and passive recreation.

Each of the activities mentioned above presents a series of significant risk exposures that the Club is ultimately responsible and accountable for.

The Club takes issues of safety and risk extremely seriously and is the only thoroughbred racing club in Australia to have an accredited safety management system and comprehensive emergency management procedures. The Club is responsible for the safety and welfare of employees, contractors and visitors including members of the public and as such have a moral and legal responsibility to manage the risks associated with the activities.

In 2008 the Club commissioned an independent risk assessment on a proposal to install palisade type fencing along the Queens Avenue, the rear of the Reserve. It had been suggested that the existing corrugated iron fence be replaced with open style "palisade" fencing, similar to that currently in place at the Station Street frontage to the property, promoting views across the Reserve.

The independent findings reinforced the vital role appropriate fencing plays in ensuring safety and security for racecourse users, workers, visitors and local residents. The risk assessment report is available on the Melbourne Racing Club website.

2.3 Sustainability

The Club, through a close association with South East Water, has developed a long term water management strategy across the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve with a view to becoming less reliant on potable water and maximise the use of other water sources.

The racecourse itself has been re-laid with dry temperature tolerant grasses, rainwater tanks have been installed for use on gardens and grounds, and two additional bores have been sunk.

In 2008 a large-scale stormwater catchment facility was commissioned, which involved installation of a sump and pump to capture stormwater from residential streets and the western end of the racecourse environs and roofs. This has improve the local environment by preventing pollution entering nearby waterways and ultimately lead to a reduction in nitrogen loads entering Port Phillip Bay. This facility is estimated to provide approximately 45 ML of recycled stormwater per annum for use throughout the Reserve.

The combined effect of the additional bores and the stormwater catchment works will vastly reduce the Club's need to use mains water for the racecourse and training tracks.

3. Use of the Reserve

3.1 Historical

The first race meeting was held at Caulfield in 1859 and the Melbourne Racing Club conducted its first meeting in 1876. There are 23 meetings scheduled for 2008/2009, highlighted by the world renowned BMW Caulfield Cup.

The Reserve has always handsomely catered for thoroughbred horse racing, however it is clear that non-racing use was limited until the 1920s.

In 1922 however, the Minister for Lands made fourteen acres of the Reserve available for non-racing use. It is this area - Glenhuntly Park - which remains a public park to this day. In the 1960s, for operational reasons Glenhuntly Park was excised from the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve. It remains Crown Land and is maintained by the City of Glen Eira. The allocation of this specific section of the Reserve for parkland in 1922 was commended by the Caulfield Citizens' Defence League and was said to satisfy their concerns that until then the Reserve was only used for Racing.



Glenhuntly Park –view across oval towards function rooms.

The Club's commitment to the local community was further demonstrated in the 1950's with the setting aside of a significant parcel of the Club's own freehold land (in return for a peppercorn amount) as the site for the Caulfield High School (now Glen Eira Secondary College).

The Reserve also has a long history as a venue for thoroughbred horse training, with more than 500 horses in work at Caulfield 365 days of the year. The Club makes an enormous contribution to the

racing industry by bearing a large portion of the maintenance costs for the training tracks and ancillary facilities, even after allowing for collection of training and stabling fees.

3.2 Current

Use of the Caulfield Racecourse includes (but is not limited to) the following activities:

- Raceday activities;
- Training facilities and training tracks with over 500 thoroughbred horses in work;
- Administration offices of the Melbourne Racing Club, Grandstands and Facilities;
- Leased areas for raceday and non raceday activities (e.g. Caravans and camping show, Monash University exams);
- Car parking;
- Public access and passive recreation and other social pursuits (eg walkers, joggers and dog walking on a leash);
- Water catchment and storage in the centre of the course for the care and protection of the reserve.

The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve facilities are also extensively utilised by a variety of community groups to hold events and to generate funds to assist their causes. A sample of community services provided at the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve includes:

- Raceday fundraising for City of Glen Eira Rotary, RSL, Lions Club, National Jockeys Foundation, Royal Children's Hospital;
- Hosting 'Back to Caulfield' for returned servicemen & women to commemorate an important chapter in Caulfield's history when the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve was temporarily donated to the Army during World War 2 to assist the war effort;
- Venue for Riding for the Disabled in the centre of the course each week;
- Hosting an annual Carols by Candlelight in conjunction with the City of Glen Eira Council;
- Hosting of Emergency Services, Police, Fire and Ambulance training;
- Hosting for Victorian Police Bomb Squad training;
- Designated as an Evacuation Centre for the City of Glen Eira.

3.3 Future

3.3.1 Joint Communiqué between the Club and Council

In 2008 the Melbourne Racing Club and Glen Eira City Council (Council) reached a milestone agreement on the use of public open space in the Centre of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve. The parties agreed to recommend to the Trustees as follows:

- a. "The prospect for horse training at Caulfield is that it will continue for the medium term and thereafter with full consultation with the whole of the Racing Industry and the Caulfield Trainers, a decision is expected to be made to relocate training to a more suitable locality away from the metropolitan area.
- b. The MRC and Council support any Industry initiative to relocate training from the Caulfield Racecourse and desire this to happen as expediently as can be facilitated by the Industry. The MRC will provide Council with an annual update on progress.
- c. After training at Caulfield Racecourse has been relocated, the MRC and Council agree that the land now occupied by the stables in the south-east corner of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve will, subject to approval by the Trustees, be hatched from the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve and be incorporated into Glen Huntly Park under the responsibility of the Council. (This would be the second major contribution by the Trustees – the first being the current Glen Huntly Park itself, which was hatched from the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve and made available as public open space many years ago.)
- d. Subject to approval by the Trustees of (a) (b) and (c), the MRC and Council agree that ball sports should be located outside of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve in Glen Huntly Park and that the Centre of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve (also known as the Flat) should be maintained and improved as passive public open space. The improvements are expected to be undertaken in 2009 – 2010 and will include enhanced pedestrian access through the vehicle tunnel located at the Glen Eira roundabout, extended disabled access in the Centre from the northern access through the Guineas tunnel, a walking track, jogging track, opportunities for fishing, seating, a BBQ area, landscaping and access to toilets.

The Community will be encouraged and welcome to use this area as passive public open space, subject to the Regulations of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve and restrictions for the purpose of running race meetings, training and major events".

In 2008 a Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Public Land recommended that the Government support the joint communiqué between the Melbourne Racing Club and the Glen Eira City Council to the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trustees, bearing in mind that further public consultation is needed with respect to the future use of public open space within the centre of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve.

In September 2008, the Trustees endorsed the joint communiqué with the exception of paragraph (c) relating to the word 'hatched', to describe the revocation of Crown Land. The Club sought advice from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the wording has been

adjusted to 'excised/revoked' which used in DSE context mean that a portion of land is removed (excised) from a Crown reserve and simultaneously, the actual Crown reservation purpose that applied to the particular excised portion is also removed (revoked).

3.3.2 Beautification of the Centre

The Club recently announced some exciting initiatives which will see the centre of the racecourse enhanced for the greater benefit of the community. The Club's proposal includes:

- Boardwalk around the existing lake. This is the perfect addition for public to stroll around the natural infield lake, possibly stop to use it for fishing, etc;
- BBQ area. Putting aside some specific areas for families to gather and cook a BBQ while enjoying the great views from the centre;
- Themed Walking/Running track. This is an idea which has been well-received by many local residents, involving a 1.6km themed track for community to use to run, jog or walk round;
- Zoned area for expanded access. At present the training of horses at certain times of the day makes it unsafe for public and horses to be in the same area. Under the proposed plans the Club would create a large area with natural division, enabling local residents to use the centre in a safe environment, while horses are being trained and exercised on the track;



There is no commercial development proposed for the centre of the reserve. By speaking with residents and assessing the Club's operations, passive recreation was identified as the most popular use for the course centre. It is all about making the centre a fun, safe and accessible place for the community to use and enjoy. With safety as the number one priority, a specially designed area will be created separating the visitors from horse training activity. This area can be accessed from sunrise to sunset.

New signs have been put up at entry points detailing how to access the centre and at what times it is safe to do so. The Club is committed to providing the community with the best possible opportunity to utilise the centre.

3.3.3 A New Park proposed for Glen Eira

Plans have been unveiled for a proposed new public park in Glen Eira. The proposed park, which will provide passive recreation, will be created as an outcome of a Land Exchange between the Melbourne Racing Club and the Crown. The process is being managed and facilitated by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The Hon Gavin Jennings, Minister for Environment and Climate Change has given his approval in-principal to the proposal.

Details of the proposal include the creation of Public Park on Booran Road adjacent to the Glen Eira Road traffic circle and the tunnel entrance to the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve. The park of 6,275m² will be landscaped to include seating, pathways and play areas in amongst the natural vegetation. The area has botanical and historical value with 95% of the species located in this area being very typical of the trees planted 100 or so years ago. These species include: - English Oak, Jacaranda, Morton Bay Fig, Canary Island Date Palm and many other significant species. This area of land will provide a unique place for the community to partake in environmental appreciation and offers the potential to be of significant value to the Crown and local community. A further 954m² of MRC freehold land will be incorporated into the current Crown Land of the Racecourse Reserve. This amounts in total to 7,229m² of MRC freehold land being exchanged for 5,867m² of Crown Land.

The DSE's conditions for the exchange are that the size of the land and the value of the land favour the Crown and the community. The Crown Land that the MRC will acquire through the exchange process is currently designated as the a car park for the Caulfield Racecourse Tabaret and Monash University staff. This land has since the late 1990's been identified by Glen Eira City Council as an area suitable for commercial development. Council's current planning scheme the "Phoenix Precinct" which stretches from Kambrook Road in the west to Monash University in the east identifies the area as suitable for accommodation, office, research and development, private medical facilities, dwellings, residential village, retirement village, entertainment, recreational and food and drink type uses that have synergies with adjacent land uses.

The lands being offered by the MRC are more than 20% greater in size than the land being offered by the Crown, and the capital works required to create the Public Park will be carried out at the cost to the MRC.