

RURAL ENVIRONMENT PLANNING ASSOCIATION INC. (REPA)

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT – MARCH 2007

REPA is continually being required to defend the rural environment of the area it represents. There always seem to be issues threatening vegetation, wildlife and wildlife corridors. 2006 has again been a busy year. As usual there have been some challenging issues with which to cope and we are having more difficulty in getting the regulatory authorities to accept our arguments, which makes our work even more difficult. The Chairman was overseas in May, June and part of July. The Secretary was also overseas in June and July.

The Committee met seven times last year, plus the **Annual General Meeting** in March 2006. Jonathon Richards, the President of the Brookfield History Group gave an illustrated talk entitled "Living in the Brookfield Valley" which was well received. A proposal to have a concessional membership rate for ordinary members residing at the same address, as another ordinary member was lost in a vote by members and the Committee was set the task of establishing a family membership. Unfortunately the initial legal advice given to legitimise Family Membership was found to be incorrect and we have had to again reconsider our approach to this arrangement. The proposal now cannot be presented at this AGM.

The lack of **rainfall and Climate Change** are the main topics of conversation these days. We are now in Level 4 water restrictions and getting closer to Level 5 unless miraculously we have significant rainfall. January and February, our normal wet season, produced only 133 mm of rain in amounts generally less than 50 mm. Al Gore's Movie, "An Inconvenient Truth" is all too realistic and the melting of the Arctic and Antarctic ice caps has really highlighted global warming.

The **Draft SEQ Regional Plan** has now gone through its first revision since last year.

The proposed **Goodna Bypass** has now been approved by the Federal Government. It is a four-bridge proposal costed at about \$2.2 billion. This is despite representations to the Prime Minister by REPA, MCA and the local community, the State Government and the Leader of the Liberal Party in Queensland, Bruce Flegg. The State Government spent \$9 M planning the upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway and the Federal Government also spent \$10 M planning the upgrade of the Goodna Bypass, so it seems the "Fed's" outspent the State to the detriment of local community wishes.

Moggill Road continues to cause concern in the community. Traffic volumes at peak periods are excessive. The widening between Kenmore and Pullenvale Road is progressing only slowly and Energex, Telstra and the BCC have been relocating their services in preparation for a start in April-May. The **Kenmore Sub-arterial Bypass** feasibility study has not yet been reported. Traffic congestion at Kenmore Roundabout remains a major concern. A meeting with the Kenmore Chamber of Commerce and Main Roads Department highlighted the problems but so far has failed to come up with a practical solution. The provision for special infrastructure charge to cover associated main road requirements is an important start, but this proposal is difficult to achieve politically.

REPA has had less direct contact with the Moggill Community Association (MCA) in the battle to revise the existing **Bellbowrie Local Plan** and to get the BCC to proceed with its revision. The Brisbane City Council continues to be pressed by developers to allow smaller block subdivisions contrary to the spirit of the Bellbowrie Local Plan. There have been numerous development applications for subdivisions within the precinct of the **Bellbowrie Local Plan**, some of which have been approved and some rejected. The subdivision of the **Pineapple Farms** continues unabated and there has been no progress on matters to alleviate and the impact on either the environment or the traffic on Moggill Road.

The **Moggill Country Club** proposed development has not been approved, but we have been advised that the property has been up for sale.

The **Gap Creek Road** upgrade has gained more prominence as the BCC has determined that the route must be completely sealed to reduce their maintenance costs. The speed limit has been reduced to 50 kph and there has been community consultation on the style of construction of the upgrade. There has been no further progress with an investigation of a **West Brisbane Bypass**, where the State Government put up \$5 M towards an investigation but the Federal Government failed to offer any support. There is a continuing **wild dogs/deer problem** in the Moggill and Brookfield area and the BCC are asking residents to report any sightings to allow a better evaluation of the severity of the problem

There is no activity with the **Kholo Creek Quarry Community Advisory Committee** and no confirmation that we will be allowed to monitor progress during the construction phase to ensure that environmental requirements are met.

The **Rafting Ground Memorial Fence** has been relocated within the park and we are proceeding with getting approvals from BCC and CWA for wording of Memorial Plaques. We tried for outside funding for the project, but were unsuccessful, so the Committee has agreed to fund the signs from our own funds.

The issue of **Mountain Bike Riding in the Mt Coot-tha Forest Park** has come to the fore again. It appears that BCC has approved the sport in areas of the park. It is REPA's contention that this activity is not acceptable or appropriate in a Conservation area because of the erosion damage done by the bikes and riders.

REPA provided a display at the **Brookfield Show** again this year. We concentrated on presenting information about the BCC Neighbourhood Planning initiative for Rafting Ground Park and the Westgate Proposal for the Wacol area, as well as the old faithfuls. REPA joined forces with THECA to produce a **local calendar**. Members supported the project and we sold 50 copies. We have had to reprint more "**Putting Back the Forest**" as stocks have dwindled. The book continues to sell in modest numbers.

REPA's Annual Walk was combined with a Moggill Creek Catchment Group's walk at Gold Creek Dam in July. 15 people attended and it was deemed a success.

Correspondence to the Association is still considerable. It is quite apparent that REPA, and particularly Jenny Hacker, our Honorary Secretary, are known widely, and people believe we can help with their problems. We continue to try and monitor town-planning issues within our rural environment; development applications are now available at the City Council web site. Jenny represented REPA at a State Opposition Cabinet Meeting and was outspoken about development issues along Moggill Road and the need to continue the Advisory Panel for Kholo Creek Quarry to ensure compliance with environmental matters. She and Bryan also attended a BCC Cabinet Meeting and may have been more successful with matters relating to covenants at Woodcrest Estate.

Newsletters have been distributed to 250 people either by mail or email. **Membership** runs from January to December. It is important to maintain as high a membership as possible to show that we are truly representative of the desires of the local community. You should have paid your dues before this meeting. We are asking for an increase in membership fees to \$20.00 this year as our operating expenses are exceeding our income if we exclude our investment income.

The **website** is at www.repa.org.au. It is upgraded regularly and is your best source of information concerning recent news and letters, lists of contacts and links to other complementary sites, a list of committee members and the latest information about activities in the district. Mandy Fisher currently updates the information as required. We are still looking for comments about the website and its content.

Finally **I** must again **thank all the Committee** for their support during my ninth term as Chairman. Their assistance has been greatly appreciated and helped to spread the workload throughout the year.

I again mention **Jenny Hacker**, our Honorary Secretary of fourteen years standing, who remains dedicated to REPA and continues to work tirelessly for it. Her knowledge of the area and the City Plan is invaluable in dealing with threats to our rural environment. She does a terrific job for the Association. Jenny has set a very high standard for any person considering taking on her role. The Chairman is most appreciative of her work

and would find it difficult to manage without her and the skills she has developed. I guess I should also thank Bryan for supporting Jenny's contribution.

There are five others I would mention specifically.

John Forest has officially resigned from the Committee, because of his greater involvement in Queensland Cricket. He was the President for four years prior to my accepting the Chairmanship, the Immediate Past President since I took office and has contributed capably in many areas specifically including getting REPA on the Kholo Creek Quarry Community Advisory Committee, chairmanship of the Bellbowrie Local Area Plan sub-committee and contributing to the Baptist Church Court Case covering the proposal to establish an 1800 seat capacity Church on Moggill Road near its junction with the Moggill Sub-Arterial Road. We are sorry to see John go. The REPA has decided to recognise his contribution by awarding him Honorary Life Membership. We wish him well for the future. We had hoped to present the Certificate tonight, but John is unable to be present. I can now only acknowledge his meritorious service and promise to make a personal presentation to him in the immediate future. Certificate.

Mandy Fisher, who is now minutes scribe and web page updater and acts as Secretary in Jenny's absence.

Rachael Griffiths, for handling the Treasury functions effectively.

Les Thompson, for his assistance with Town Planning matters.

Eric Walker, who is no longer on the Committee, but still organises the distribution of our REPA News and other notices to members.

The fact that I have mentioned these people specifically is not intended to detract from the input by other members of the Committee.

We are keen to co-opt new people to the Committee to provide the next generation of Office Bearers. If there is anyone from the floor interested in assisting us preserve the area in its rural state, please be upstanding and have your name listed for a Committee position. Both the Chairman and Secretary are for looking fresh faces to continue the work of REPA.

The Chairman has been in the chair for nine years. I believe it is time for a change of Chairman. I have been unable to find a replacement. I am giving a final warning that I will not renominate in March 2008. We need a replacement!!

Thank you for attending the AGM, as this is the main chance for members to meet and discuss pertinent issues.

Signed

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John Bristow, Chairman