

RURAL ENVIRONMENT PLANNING ASSOCIATION (REPA)

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT – MARCH 2008

This will be my last Annual report. I am standing down as Chairman this year.

REPA has had a considerable boost to its membership as a result of outside interest in the potential impact of a proposed Western Brisbane Bypass and the Western Brisbane Transport Network Investigation (WBTNI) by the Queensland Government. A sub-committee of REPA was formed and given the acronym WB BAG (which we pronounce as ““W”, “B”, Bag”).

This year has continued with more of the same activity, defending our rural environment. There are always issues threatening vegetation, wildlife and wildlife corridors, including the now scrapped Western Brisbane Bypass. 2007 has been a challenging year. The Chairman went bush for three weeks in May 2007. The Secretary has also been away in June – July and again in October – November 2007.

The Committee met eight times between AGM's, plus the **Annual General Meeting** in March 2007. Helen Flavelle, a Project Officer from the Brisbane City Council gave an illustrated talk “Mapping the Landscape Asset”. It was a very interesting talk which provided an insight into the back room activities within the Planning Department.

REPA is grateful to Guy Edgecombe and his firm MacGillivrays for reviewing our Constitution. They advised that it was not necessary to go to the expense and inconvenience of amending our Constitution. A Membership Fee increase to \$20.00 was approved at the last AGM.

2007 continued to be impacted by a lack for rainfall and it was only our entry into 2008 that saw some worthwhile rainfall. 2007 was plagued with largely showery weather giving falls of generally less than 25 mm sporadically throughout that year. **Climate Change** continues to dominate conversation. We moved to Level 6 water restrictions in July with residents asked to reduce their consumption down to 140 litres per person per day. Many residents have installed rain water tanks, which is the only way to get consumption down to amounts called for, unless you are not a gardener. I installed 23,000 litres of storage in two tanks which has allowed my wife to rescue some of the garden by using rainwater.

The proposed **Goodna Bypass** has been **abandoned** in favour of an **upgrade** of the **Ipswich Motorway** as a result of the election in November and the change in Government from Liberal to Labour.

Moggill Road has become untenable as a result of the widening between Kilkivan Avenue and Pullenvale Road and the only possible solution to the bottleneck at the Kenmore Roundabout is an investigation into the feasibility of building the Kenmore Bypass between the Centenary Highway and Moggill Road at Pinjarra Hills. This is not necessarily a sound solution. The Brisbane City Council continues to approve house construction in the Moggill/Bellbowrie area adding to the already excessive traffic volumes at peak periods. The provision for special infrastructure charge to cover associated main road requirements must be introduced if funding arrangements necessary are to be available.

The **Bellbowrie Local Plan** has not been updated to provide the codes required to control development in an environmentally friendly manner in spite of our presentations to the Planning Department over the years. The Brisbane City Council continues to approve smaller block subdivisions contrary to the spirit of the Bellbowrie Local Plan. There have been subdivisions of larger blocks approved contrary to the original subdivision proposal. The subdivision of the **Pineapple Farms** continues to generate more traffic to Moggill Road.

The **Moggill Country Club** proposed development has not been approved, but remains dormant with no decision. The land is largely under the 1974 flood level, so this is not a sound proposal.

There have been no further announcements about the **Westgate Development Project** in the Wacol Area.

The proposed **Gap Creek Road** upgrade has not started, but the next step towards sealing of the road, is the release of an Ecological Study undertaken by GHD to supposedly establish the impact of the proposal and the need for speed and traffic control measures in the upgrade. This report is not up to the desired standard. There are arguments about the speed limit and the need for a bicycle and walking track beside the route.

West Brisbane Bypass Action Group WB-BAG was formed as a REPA sub-committee in April 2007, with its own web site www.westernbypass.org. Their objectives were to address the specific concerns of residents in the REPA Area and beyond, with regard to the proposed bypass and its possible location. Members of the sub-committee comprise an active group of local residents who do not wish to see a bypass or ring road coming through this part of Brisbane. Our Secretary, Jenny Hacker, along with Keith Tonkin and Bruce Flegg, the then Queensland Leader of the Liberal Party visited Canberra to have talks with Jim Lloyd, Federal Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, Michael Johnson and Cameron Thompson about both the Goodna Bypass and the proposed Western Brisbane Bypass. As a result of the meeting Jim Lloyd gave a commitment to undertake a desktop scoping study of a possible bypass route through the Brisbane Valley. In July the sub-committee was reformed and a new committee formed with David McCullough, as its Chairman. David is also a member of the WBTNI Community Liaison Group (South). Rachael Griffiths was also appointed on the Liaison Group as a person representing THECA. The final WBTNI "Terms of Reference" were released in October. The Investigation will make available a number of scenarios and transport options available for comment in April this year. Just one week ago a press announcement heralded the Governments scrapping of this controversial bypass in favour of a tunnel from the Toowong Cemetery to Carseldine. The formation of the subgroup, WB BAG, has borne fruit in preventing a bypass through Brookfield on the alignment of Gap Creek Road. Good work by the team under David McCullough.

Wild dogs and deer continue to be found 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.

A plaque providing the historical background to the **Rafting Ground Memorial Fence** has been financed by Margaret de Wit and is based on information provided by REPA and Graeme Wilson the then Secretary of the Rafting Ground Memorial Committee.

REPA had its usual display at the **Brookfield Show**. The display concentrated the Western Brisbane Bypass Investigation (WBTNI) information, as well as the old faithfuls. REPA joined forces with THECA to produce a **local calendar** again, which had this time the week from Sunday to Saturday. Members supported the project and we sold 59 copies.

There have been issues at the Brookfield Show Ground and the Brookfield State School concerning vegetation clearing of trees and shrubbery which REPA has been involved.

REPA's Annual Walk was combined with a Moggill Creek Catchment Group's walk at Gold Creek Dam.

Correspondence to the Association continues to roll in. It is obvious that people believe we can help with their problems. We continue to monitor town-planning issues within our rural environment. Development Applications can now be viewed on the City Council web site.

Five Newsletters were distributed to an increased membership of about 330 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 \$20.00 fee before this meeting.

The **REPA website** continues at www.repa.org.au. It is upgraded monthly and is your best source of information concerning recent news and events, lists of contacts and links to other complementary sites, a list of committee members and the latest information about activities in the district.

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

Each year I mention **Jenny Hacker**, our Honorary Secretary of fifteen 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 should also thank Bryan for supporting Jenny's contribution.

There are six others I would mention as they have made specific contributions.

Lou Endean, who resigned from the committee to make way for younger nominees, and who is missed, at least for her culinary skills when she brought us freshly cooked cakes or biscuits to consume at the end of the committee meetings. She knows the best way to a man's affection is through his stomach?

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

David McCullough, for leading the WB BAG Group

Rachael Griffiths, for handling the Treasury functions effectively.

Les Thompson, for his assistance with Town Planning matters.

Eric Walker, who remotely organises the distribution of our REPA News and other notices to members.

The fact that I have named these people is not intended to detract from the input by other members of the Committee who have each made their own input.

We are keen to coopt 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.

Finally, I must welcome **Dr Anna Williamson** REPA's new Chairwoman of the Rural Environment Planning Association. I thank her for stepping into my shoes, and wish her well with running the Association

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

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John Bristow, Chairman