



REPA NEWSLETTER

RURAL ENVIRONMENT PLANNING ASSOCIATION INC.

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The Management Committee of REPA wishes all our members a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. We hope for RAIN, lots of it, in the New Year. As Councillor Margaret de Wit mentioned in her recent "*Pullenvale Perspective*", if we do not have good rain this summer (and the indications are poor), Brisbane is going to be in 'dire straits'. Many of us question the wisdom of allowing and encouraging more people to live in SE Queensland if we do not have sufficient water for those that are already here. The construction of a pipeline to take recycled water to Swanbank power station will help the situation. It would seem that some of the predictions by climatologists in the 1980s are indeed coming to pass, and now with improved climatic predictions the future for water supply in SE Queensland looks bleak. Chairman John Bristow attended an Energy Forum at the beginning of November at which the need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases was demonstrated very strongly. We all need to try to reduce our energy requirements.

Goodna Bypass

We are expecting an announcement soon on the preferred route for the proposed Goodna Bypass or Ipswich Motorway Alternative Northern Corridor (ANC). According to the Main Roads Department web-site, 'the 2005 Ipswich Motorway Northern Option Feasibility Report identified three potentially feasible corridor options. A new study to determine whether any of these three options are [sic] viable is now underway, and is expected to be completed by late 2006/early 2007'. The most recent issue of the "Westside News" (29 November 2006) mentioned residents' serious concerns regarding the proposed route. REPA has seen a copy of an assurance from the federal member for Blair, Cameron Thompson, that any route into the Moggill area would not be able to support an on- or off-ramp in Moggill because 'the spacing between the Cunningham Highway and a new interchange [in Moggill] would be too close'. REPA remains opposed to any option for upgrading the Ipswich Motorway that involves river crossings into the Moggill area.

Mountain Bikes in Mt Coot-tha

In October this year, Brisbane City Council produced a report on mountain biking in the City. In essence, the report supports the promotion of the sport of mountain biking in many natural areas of the City including Mt Coot-tha. The Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) has a representative on the Mountain Biking Advisory Committee. Whilst REPA and MCCG agree that cycling through natural areas for appreciation of those areas is acceptable, their use for the competitive sport of cross country mountain biking is not acceptable. REPA considers that such sporting activities are incompatible with the conservation status of Mt Coot-tha. Furthermore, because many trails are now mountain bike only trails, walkers and horse-riders are now excluded from substantial areas of Mt Coot-tha. The mountain bikers claim that they do no more damage to trails than do walkers and the report quotes studies from overseas; studies which MCCG and REPA consider not to be directly applicable to Mt Coot-tha. Mt Coot-tha soils are skeletal in nature and very fragile and easily eroded. The damage along some trails is considerable.

Rafting Ground Park

In June this year, REPA applied to the Queensland Department of Communities for a grant to pay for the installation of signage for the split-rail Pioneer Fence at Rafting Ground Park. Unfortunately we have not been successful in being awarded the grant. Nevertheless, REPA Management Committee has decided that we should fund the signs ourselves, providing that it is acceptable to Council. The fence was originally constructed in 1961 under the auspices of the CWA to mark the centenary of separation of Queensland from New South Wales in 1859 and to commemorate the pioneers of the district.

Development Applications

Moggill Country Club. REPA has been informally advised by hearsay that this land has been purchased by a private individual for use as a single residence. If this is true, whilst REPA is pleased that a proposal for a development contrary to planning regulations does not appear to be going ahead, REPA regrets the possibility that the golf course area will no longer be available for recreation. If anyone has further information on this important site, Jenny or John (contacts given below) would be pleased to hear of it.

120 Church Road, Moggill REPA has been advised by the assessment manager for this site that a new Development Application is expected, possibly before Christmas. The previous application, for a 100 lot subdivision on 18.6 ha, was lodged in November 2004. There have been various problems with this application as some of the required procedures were not followed. Furthermore, Council considered in July this year that 'the draft proposal plan can not be supported', as the proposal 'fails to recognise the significance and sensitivity of the site including waterways and other constraints..'. Apparently the submissions to the earlier application will still be considered valid for the new application, but there will be the opportunity to present further submissions. Jenny is checking the Council web-site regularly to see whether or not a new application has been lodged.

Gap Creek Road

REPA has received a response (1 Nov 2006) from the Lord Mayor addressing our concerns about the proposed upgrade to Gap Creek Road. In the response the Lord Mayor acknowledged 'concerns that an upgrade would lead to more traffic using the road', and said that 'significant work will be done to ensure that its attraction as a through route will be minimised'. He also recognised the need to integrate options for the protection of wildlife into the design.

Natural Area Alliance

On 2 December, Jenny and Bryan attended an inaugural meeting of the Natural Area Alliance at the EcoCentre at Griffith University. The Alliance is an association of groups with environmental concerns aimed at providing mutual support and a unified voice on issues of environmental concern. The three initial concerns were: -

- Mountain Biking in Conservation Areas,
- Current Fire Hazard Reduction (burning) Practices – micro mosaic burning techniques should be utilised,
- and, at Jenny's instigation, the Brisbane River corridor and flood plains should not be utilised as a transport corridor (this was in response to Goodna Bypass concerns).

Queensland Environmental Law Association (QELA)

Jenny and Bryan attended the QELA seminar on 'Water Law and Policy' in October, which addressed water use issues. The seminar on 'development in koala habitat', also in October, was attended by MCCG member Christine Hosking who was disappointed to learn that EPA (Environment Protection Agency) considers that as Mt Coot-tha is already a conservation area this confers enough protection for koalas on Mt Coot-tha. Jenny attended the seminar on 'Land Resumption' in November. If members have concerns on these issues, please do contact Jenny who will endeavour to find further information.

Feral Dogs and Deer

Glen Alchin, BCC's Pest Management Officer, spoke about new plans to address the problems of feral dogs and deer at the Moggill Creek Catchment Group's AGM on 15 November. He reminded all present that it is important to report all sightings to the City Council Call Centre 3403 8888 (24 hours a day, seven days a week). It is necessary to report the sighting the same day.

THECA calendar

All REPA's allocation of 2007 calendars has now been sold. If any member still wishes to purchase one they should contact THECA at 3878 5088.

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