

# PARKLANDSNEWS

December 2006 Number 25

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# President's letter

Well its over! The Symposium in early November was the largest event held in the history of our Association and it was an excellent collaboration with The Hawke Centre and the UniSA. We now have an imposing book of the Proceedings which includes the 15 papers that were presented. They are a lasting record which could possibly become the basis for preparing an updated history of the Adelaide Parklands. The Proceedings will also be useful in presenting the case for heritage listing. Our special thanks go to Dr Christine Garnaut for coordinating the many referees and the preparation of the papers. It is a time-consuming and detailed task involving many hours of editing and proofreading.

I would also like to thank the many people who worked untiringly to make this event happen, such as your hard-working APPA committee, and members of the organising committee: Elizabeth Ho, Director of the Bob Hawke Centre; Dr Christine Garnaut, Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design UniSA; and Louise Carnell, Project Coordinator. It was a pleasure working with such a competent team.

One of the major issues that came out of the Public Forum on the Sunday was

the need for the Parklands to receive more support from the corporate sector of the city. It was interesting to hear from Sarah Whyte our guest speaker who gave examples of the support given to the Centennial Park, Sydney through their Foundation. The Forum identified a number of threats, challenges and solutions regarding the Adelaide Parklands and these will be given priority by your Committee in the coming months as we seek to carry out the work of the Association.

I support the creation of the new Park Lands Authority because, although the structure of the organisation is far from perfect, it was the best that could be achieved following complex negotiations that took place between the State Government and the Adelaide City Council. It should be given a chance to perform and perhaps, over time, the Authority might achieve what we all want; that is, decision making and leadership that preserve the essence of the open space characteristics of the Parklands and also improve the settings for the enjoyment of people.

In a recent opinion piece for one of our newspapers, I made the following comments on the new Parklands Authority:

*What would Adelaide be like without its surrounding Parklands? A look at other large metropolitan cities that have lost their open spaces gives an idea of how lucky we are to have this priceless asset. Since 1836 when Colonel Light planned our Parklands, they have attracted the attention of proponents with sometimes worthy proposals all wanting a piece of 'free' land. If all these apparently worthy proposals were accommodated, we would have no open space left.*

*All is not lost because late last year, Parliament approved the creation of the Adelaide Park Lands Authority about to be appointed with representatives from the Adelaide City Council, State Government and the community. Their Charter states that the main purpose is 'protecting, and*



*enhancing the Adelaide Park Lands for the benefit of all South Australians'. It will be interesting to see if the government makes a decision on Victoria Park before the new Authority is appointed, or when it is appointed; how they interpret their main task of protecting and enhancing the Adelaide Parklands in the light of this large grandstand incursion into an iconic landscape.*

*Another task for the new Authority might be to establish a clear policy on major commercial events in the Parklands such as trade shows, circuses and concerts. We have the extraordinary situation that because the applicants do not receive clear directions on what events are acceptable, they go through a public consultation process (sometimes less than transparent) before the Council makes a decision. On the surface, this seems very democratic, but it would be more helpful if the event organisers and the public knew what events are acceptable for commercial use of the Parklands.*

As we approach the Christmas period with its rush and pressure to complete unfinished tasks of 2006 and prepare for 2007, it will also be an opportunity to take time out to consider the really enduring values we hold dear in our lives. I extend a special welcome to all our new members, and wish all APPA supporters the compliments of the season.

*Jim Daly*

## ISSUES ON THE TABLE

Parklands legislation implementation

World Heritage listing

Land grab at Victoria Park

Biodiversity survey

Heritage listing of 1889 Arbor Day plantings

Adelaide Bowling Club's activities

Hurtle Square redevelopment

Britannia intersection land grab

Dying elms

SACA car park push

Alienated Parklands

Bakewell Bridge

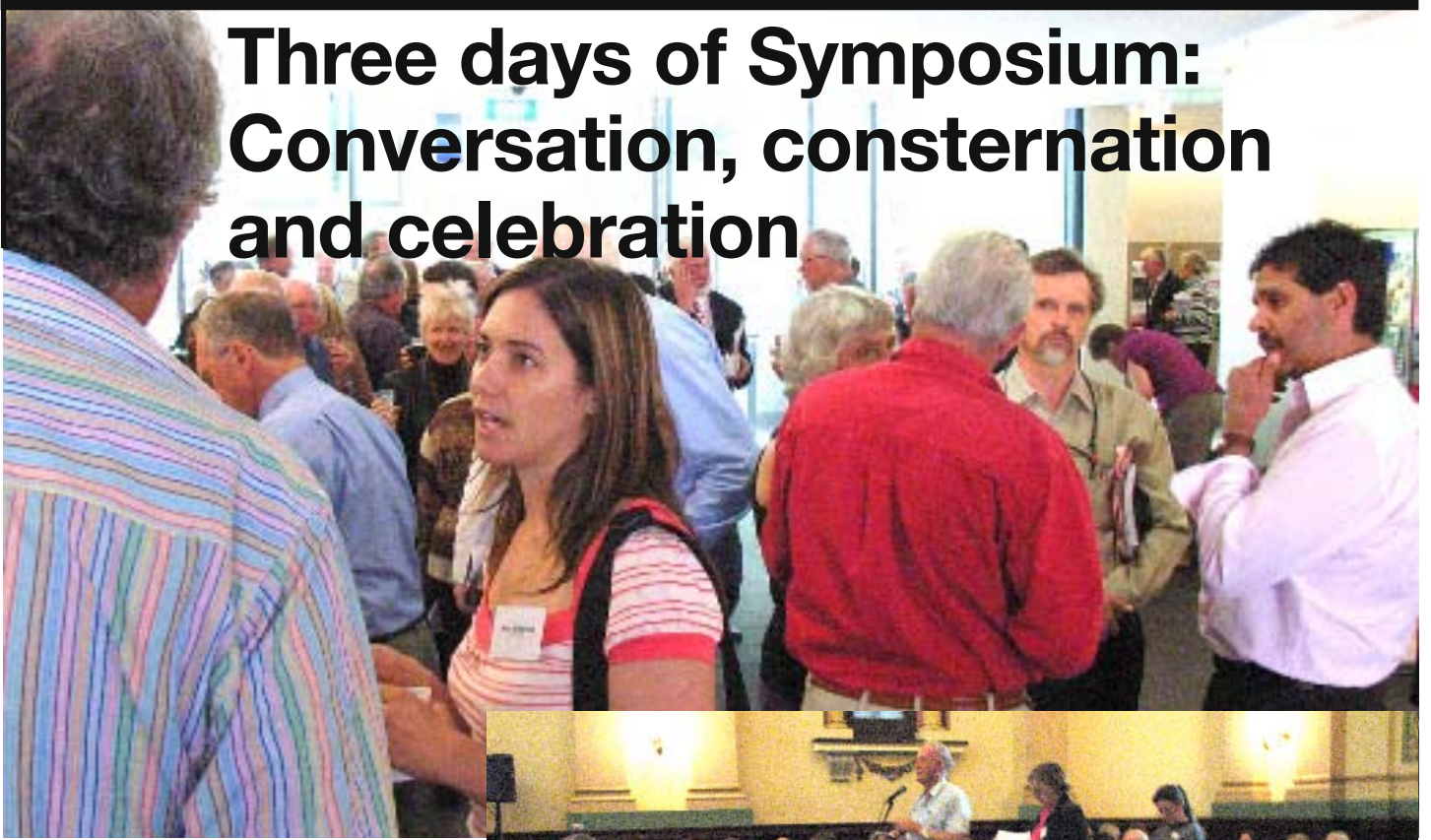
Watering regime during drought

**What is popular is not always right and what is right is not always popular.**

*Front cover: Hardenbergia in Edwards Park. Photo taken September 2005 by Gunta Groves.*



# Three days of Symposium: Conversation, consternation and celebration



*Above: Morning tea break at the Friday Symposium—exchange of ideas continued unabated amongst the participants.*

*Right: Public Forum on the Sunday in the Banqueting Room in the Adelaide Town Hall—questions from the public were directed at the main presenters: Sarah Whyte from Sydney, Minister Jane Lomax-Smith and Lord Mayor Michael Harbison.*



*Above: The Lord Mayor's reception for APPA members was held Sunday, after the Public Forum—APPA members and their friends enjoyed the conversation and refreshments in the beautiful Queen Adelaide Room of the Town Hall.*

*Far right: George Seddon, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, School of Social and Cultural Studies, University of Western Australia, drawn by Kathleen Patitsas while he gave his paper on 'Adelaide's alter-egos' on the Friday.*



*Right: Sarah Whyte and Iain Innes from Sydney's Centennial Parklands Foundation and administration respectively, with APPA President Jim Daly at the Lord Mayor's reception on the Sunday.*



*Continued next page*



## Conversation

The Adelaide Parklands Symposium 10–12 November 2006 provided many opportunities for the 90 or so participants to share opinions and concerns. The presentations on the Friday were varied and interesting, and all were followed by probing questions from the audience. During the lunch break, some people took the opportunity to walk to the Frome Street rehabilitation site to see the progress and particular problems of remediation. Because there is soil contamination in patches (possibly due to the previous occupation by a trade school), difficulties have arisen with costs and landscaping connected to overcoming the contamination issues. The Adelaide City Council is still working through these issues, but at least the hard surfaces have been ripped up.

Conversations were continued on Saturday during the tours of the Parklands, with promising new connections made with Symposium participants, and old acquaintanceships were renewed on the Sunday at the Public Forum, which was attended by well over 100 people, and at the Lord Mayor's reception afterwards.

## Consternation

Some of the presentations on the Friday were very provocative, suggesting such things as Rome-style squares for the Parklands, and a future for Adelaide and its Parklands that could follow 'Hawker and Quorn into oblivion' (George Seddon in the Proceedings of the Symposium, p 185). In a presentation about recognition of Kaurna heritage in the Parklands, it was suggested by Lester-Irabinna Rigney of Flinders University that the activities of Indigenous people in the Parklands were to do with pursuing their cultural roots rather than with being 'homeless'.

On the Sunday, the Public Forum became more of a forum for Jane Lomax-Smith and Michael Harbison—the questions from the floor were squeezed into a shorter and shorter time as the answers to the questions became longer and longer.

## Celebration

Finally, though, these three days were a celebration of the fact that we still have the Parklands to talk about, despite all the past and present—and no doubt future—pressures to give them over to 'good ideas'. The feeling was strong amongst all the participants over the three days that the Adelaide Parklands were very special.

Gunta Groves

# THE WORST-KEPT SECRET IS FINALLY OUT

Friends of the Parklands have been hearing rumours about Victoria Park for a long time. Ironically, on the weekend of the Adelaide Parklands Symposium—when we were all talking about the preciousness of our Parklands—sources close to the decision makers in government confirmed that the multi-function, multi-storey development in the middle of Victoria Park was finally endorsed by the Rann Government.

The development proposal is for a multiple-use facility that will be run 7-days-a-week, 52-weeks-a-year. Major users of this facility will be motor racing organisers and the SA Jockey Club, but there will also be room for commercial functions and a restaurant.

*Sunday Mail* again (1 Jun 2003, p L11) he was quoted saying 'I want Adelaide to be known as a green city with a world-wide reputation for its protection of open spaces and parklands'.

So much for politicians' promises! True to his reputation, Mike Rann seizes the opportunities to make impressions through the media. Whether anything comes of it is another matter. For example, the long-awaited legislation to protect the Parklands was finally passed in November 2005 and here we are at the end of 2006 and the Act is still not proclaimed and the Authority still doesn't exist. Apparently, this Labor Government is so contemptuous of the electorate that it believes the public's apathy will

**Victoria Park will  
henceforth be known as  
*RANN-cid Park*  
until the stench of  
threatened development is  
removed**

At the time of going to press with this newsletter, official announcements were yet to be made, possibly to allow us all to get well and truly into the 'silly season'.

APPA members had been hoping that the statements made by Premier Rann, before coming to power and even after first being elected to government, were indicative of his true intentions regarding the Parklands. Remember this? In *The Advertiser* (8 Dec 2000, p 5) '... he said Labor was prepared to work with the Government to ensure the legislation "would guarantee the protection of the parklands for future generations"; in the *Sunday Mail* (9 Jun 2002, p 2) Premier Rann, on the eve of Labor's first 100 days in office, promised 'introducing legislation to protect Adelaide's parklands from future developments'; and in the

allow this kind of procrastination and this horrendous land grab in Victoria Park to go ahead.

Labor's current majority possibly allows them this arrogance. However, the seats most affected by activities in Victoria Park are Adelaide and Norwood, and there will be a lot of people working towards those seats being lost to Labor at the next state election. Indeed, some media—namely the *City Messenger* (30 Nov 2006, pp 3, 14) and the *Adelaide Review* (1–14 Dec 2006 pp 7)—are to be congratulated for carrying articles that are more even-handed about the government-generated stench in RANN-cid Park. Perhaps, Mike Rann's government won't be so comfortable in the near future.

Gunta Groves

# BRUNO KRUMINS AM: Lieutenant Governor and patron of APPA



*Above: Mr Bruno Krumins AM, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia, and now patron of the Adelaide Parklands Preservation Assoc Inc. Photo by David Cronin, The Advertiser.*

The Association's new patron is Bruno Krumins, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia.

The Lieutenant Governor, appointed by The Queen, acts as Deputy for the Governor. Mr Bruno Krumins AM was appointed to this role in 2000.

Bruno Krumins was born in Latvia in 1924 and settled in Australia in 1949. He was one of many refugees from war-torn Europe who met the challenges of resettling in Australia. From the outset, Mr Krumins was interested in working for the good of the community. His tireless focus on the cultural, educational, political and welfare needs of Latvians in Australia was the strong foundation for his later activity in helping to develop South Australia's multicultural policies. Bruno Krumins played a key role in establishing the Ethnic Communities Council in South Australia in 1979. He

then became the inaugural chairman and chief executive of the newly formed South Australian Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1981. He was Vice President of the Ethnic Communities Council of South Australia 1986–88 and President 1988–92.

His achievements were recognised in 1986 when he was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to ethnic communities and to the Latvian community.

APPA welcomes his new passion for preserving the Adelaide Parklands for future generations and, based on his previous energetic track record, looks forward to his contribution.

*Gunta Groves*

*Source and further information:*  
<<http://www.governor.sa.gov.au/>>

## COMMUNITY FORUM ON PROTECTING PUBLIC LAND

Independent MP Kris Hanna, Member for Mitchell, hosted a well-attended community forum in the Balcony Room of Parliament House on Wednesday evening, 22 November. The forum was opened by Independent MP, Nick Xenophon.

Six speakers representing community groups and interests addressed the crowd. The topic of mutual interest was

how to preserve precious public spaces for future generations.

Peter Goad, President of Save Albert Park, related the sad history of the loss of Melbourne's Albert Park to the Grand Prix circuit and highlighted the lessons that Adelaide could learn. Jim Daly, APPA President, outlined the history of Adelaide Parklands preservation, and indicated that a new era is about to commence with the Parklands legislation and Authority coming into play soon. The South East City Residents Assoc (SECRA) was represented by inaugural President, David

Plumridge, who described the motivations behind setting up SECRA and its activities to date.

The struggles of residents in the western suburbs to retain open space was passionately described by John Letts. The Cheltenham racecourse had, up to the previous two weeks, always been accessible except for the two days a month when racing was on. He related his fond memories of playing as a child in the area and of mushrooming on the racecourse—activities that had recently become impossible due to the gates being locked.

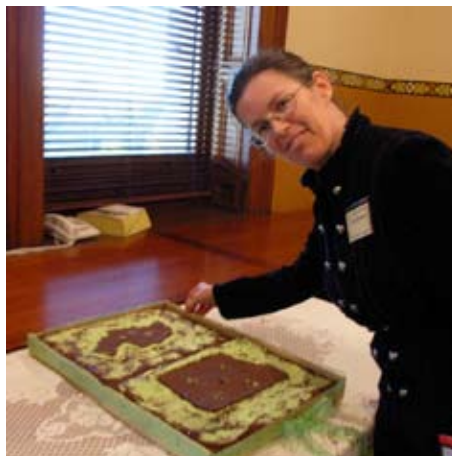
Kelly Henderson gave an entertaining overview of how Adelaide got its Parklands, and also congratulated Kathleen Patitsas, APPA member, for being the first to nominate the Adelaide Parklands for state heritage listing 20 years ago—an act that has been repeated many times since with no result.

A large chocolate cake in the shape of the City of Adelaide added the sweetness to this bittersweet event.

*Gunta Groves*



*Above: Kathleen Patitsas, APPA member. Right: Kelly Henderson with the chocolate and mint cake representing the City of Adelaide. Photos by Gunta Groves.*





# Free 'U-Parks' in the Parklands

The Parklands are always expected to accommodate cars these days. Despite what some ACC Community Land Management Plans say about discouraging car parking, cars continue to intrude into the Parklands. On any given work day, there would be several hundreds of cars parked 'legally' and illegally in the Parklands.

The Royal Adelaide Show is one example of events that apparently can't exist without car parking in the Parklands, but there are many more. The South Australian Cricket Assoc (SACA) seems to consider the 'northern car park', which is really Tarndanya Womma (Park 26), as there for its use. By referring to it as the 'northern car park' it somehow legitimises SACA's use in this way. Similarly, Pinky Flat is assaulted regularly by patrons attending events at the Adelaide Oval or Memorial Drive tennis courts. In the near future, both these areas will be abused and denuded by car parking for the Test match and the Next Generation International tennis matches. Given the dry conditions already affecting the Parklands, imagine the dustbowls that will be created.

Another trend is for more cars to be parked on every bit of bitumen that still intrudes into the Parklands. Good examples are the couple of roads coming off West Terrace. On 30 August, a Wednesday, I counted 74 cars parked all day in Narnungga (Park 25), which includes the Railways Oval. In addition, several caravans and containers for ACC workers were located there forming a makeshift depot.

Interestingly, the ACC has erected conflicting signs about the legality of this car parking, and there is no consistent enforcement of the basic expectation that cars will not be parked in the Parklands.

To test this theory (albeit unintentionally—we were looking at the derelict Parklands

(Editor's note: U-Parks are run by the ACC.)



*Above: Adelaide Bowling Club in Rymill Park, 11.30am Wednesday 20 September, with not a soul on the greens but plenty of cars in the car park proudly proclaimed as theirs on the sign. Even the club's vice president gets a reserved space.*

*Below: South Park Tennis and Hockey Centre's car park along Greenhill Road is used for parking all day every day, with not a tennis or hockey player in sight.*

*Bottom: Car parking behind the Pavilion restaurant in Veale Gardens is reserved exclusively for patrons, apparently. Neither the restaurant nor the parking should be allowed there.*





Right: A dryland angler made himself at home on the Parklands east of Hutt Street—Tuttangga (Park 17). His access with his 4WD was facilitated by the new Park Lands Trail which is a convenient 3m wide bituminised ‘road’ with no bollards stopping vehicle access.

Below: Parklands west of Morphett Street Bridge, used by casino employees for car parking. The derelict nature of this area of the Parklands can be seen in the foreground. It is this area that the likes of Paul Starick think should be used for a stadium.



west of Morphett Street Bridge), some of your intrepid committee parked their cars on the road servicing the Adelaide Casino’s leased car park on the west side of Morphett Street Bridge. It was a Saturday afternoon. Within 15 minutes parking inspectors were giving us tickets, so evidently the ACC enforces some parking regulations.

The inconsistency goes further. One morning a 4WD vehicle was spotted parked in Tuttangga (Park 17). The driver was practising casting with his rod and even asked passing visitors going to the University Games matches to keep out of his way. An ACC vehicle stopped next to him and the crew greeted the dryland angler in a familiar fashion and proceeded to have a morning tea break with him.

Another area used for illegal parking is the northern end of Victoria Park which is leased by the SAJC. The Temporary Fence Hire Company parks its trucks there on a regular basis and also stores its fencing there and in the nearby shed.

It is time that both ACC-sanctioned parking and opportunistic parking in the Parklands were stopped. Council policies need to be clarified, communicated to rangers and parking inspectors, and parking signs corrected. It is not a difficult principle to understand: parking should not be permitted on the Parklands.



Above: Daily car parking occurs in Narnungga (Park 25) on the access roads around Railway Oval and in the designated car park area. There were 74 cars there on Wednesday 30 August. Conflicting signs abound. Most of them indicate that parking is not allowed but some are ambiguous. Regardless of the clarity, or otherwise, of the signs, cars are parked right next to them. The middle photo shows that the area is also used by contractors working for the Adelaide City Council. This was described as a temporary depot by a contractor.

# Why South Australians have been conned over future Parklands management

About two years ago, 46 organisations provided submissions and 160 participants provided feedback to the State Government on the future management of Adelaide's Parklands.

Many wanted two key aspects:

1. A Parklands management body independent of the council or government of the day.
2. Legislation that gave the body teeth to ensure that its strategic plans were safe from the whims of city councillors, mayors and MPs of the day.

Given the emerging detail about the new (but yet-to-be-proclaimed) *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005*, and its 'Adelaide Park Lands Authority', most South Australians should be very disappointed. In many respects, they've been conned.

Go back three years to 22 June 2003, when the State Government published a news release about the results of wide public consultation on future mechanisms to protect the Parklands from some of the commercial horrors and mismanagements of the past. It stated: 'The majority of submissions from park land advocacy groups, councils and the community have favoured a management model that allows more community involvement in decisions, and gives some independence from State Government and the City Council ... There was strong interest from surrounding councils in having a say in the protection and management of the park lands. Adelaide City Council ratepayers should not have to bear almost all of the cost of managing the park lands.'

However, the Act indicates that:

- There is no guarantee that there will be community involvement in Authority activities.
- It will have no independence from the government or the council. Half the Board members will be council nominations, and council very recently announced that it wanted councillors to sit in all five chairs. The other half will be ministerial nominations.
- It will have no real authority.

- There is no mechanism to guarantee that surrounding councils may participate.
- Adelaide City Council's ratepayers will bear the majority of costs to run the Authority and manage the Parklands, and pay a new hourly sitting fee to Board members.

There are some bouquets about other parts of the Act. The proposal to define, via new legislation, the Parklands boundaries (the Park Lands Plan) and put in place a strategic planning framework should be cautiously welcomed. These have been long overdue. Further, other provisions that demand the attention of both houses of parliament (variation of the park lands plans; leases of 10 years or more) also should be cautiously welcomed. However, much of the Act is about setting up the new 'Authority', which is where the disappointments emerge. This is because:

- It's to be just another council sub-committee, despite the suggestion of an 'arm's-length' operation. A Parklands committee already exists and this may simply replace it.
- It will be toothless; its task is claimed to be 'a key policy role' but its functions, apart from strategic planning (which already occurs in council), are to provide only 'comments' and 'advice' to council or the minister. It may do all the strategic planning it likes, but these plans can be ignored with impunity by both council and the government.
- It will be subject to the directions of the minister of the day for 'advice' on 'policy, development or management issues'.
- The community will have no guarantee of participation, no guaranteed freedom to attend meetings, and ill-defined rights to receive timely and detailed annual reports.

A significant weakness is that there is no clear mechanism that would hold Parklands managers accountable for their actions (or lack of action), despite government spin doctors implying this. They did this at the end of a 9 September 2003 government Parklands report

summarising what the government intended to do when writing the new Act. Its findings concluded: 'They [the findings] provide for a strong and broad-based policy setting/monitoring body that can hold land managers (Council and State Government) accountable for delivering policies ...'.

It cannot be a 'strong' body. It will be as powerless as any other council sub-committee. It certainly will not be able to hold 'land managers' accountable because no mechanisms are provided in the Act for this to occur. Its funding also could be uncertain. In the true spirit of 'Yes Minister', the Authority may well end up being nothing more than a 'puppet committee', existing on a shoe string.

The suggestion that it will be able to set policy is rubbish. That role remains firmly in the hands of the State Government or council. Indeed, the government's 'Final Report' of 2003 stated that: '[The Authority's] role would be to comment on and endorse policies prepared by land managers'. That's all. The only reference to policy in s 9 of the Act is '... to provide advice ... on policy'.

The draft charter for the Authority is now written. Council likes it, and on 25 September 2006 endorsed a proposal that future Board members receive a fee of \$40 per hour. The councillor who endorsed it then hastily nominated four councillors to fill the five chairs available (under the Act the Lord Mayor, the fifth council member, is recommended as chairman). At 18 October 2006, the government hadn't formally endorsed any names.

The Authority is a council triumph, capitalising on a parliamentary triumph. But not for the reasons you might think. It is widely known in Adelaide circles that the 2002-05 experience of pushing through new Parklands legislation was like 'walking on eggshells', given the myriad interests and conflicting agendas of those who called the shots on Parklands developments leading up to 2002. At the beginning, in about 2003, it was an open secret that council had made it clear that it would go along with the new Bill only if



# *Apologists for the now-evident outcomes admit that nothing radical was ever likely to succeed. The outcome is a bit like saying: 'We know you wanted a horse, but at least you got a dog'.*

it were guaranteed half the seats on any 'Authority'. Apologists for the now-evident outcomes admit that nothing radical was ever likely to succeed. The outcome is a bit like saying: 'We know you wanted a horse, but at least you got a dog'. They are right in one sense: the Authority as a body with real policy independence capable of delivering what electors wanted certainly has the potential to be a dog—and a poodle at that.

Let's look at some of the disappointments inherent in the recently released charter of the Authority, focusing on transparency and reporting.

1. The potential for secrecy in operations will be very high. The new Authority is to operate under the s 90(3) confidentiality provisions of the Local Government Act which will allow it to hold confidential meetings as and when members think fit, under very broad 'commercial-in-confidence' provisions. Members of the public attending future Authority meetings could be thrown out and the doors closed when material deemed confidential arises. Remember that Adelaide City Council is by far the most secretive local government authority in South Australia, with 2004–05 figures showing that council went into 'confidential' meetings 60 times, 50 per cent more than the next most-secretive SA council in that year. 'Confidential meeting' figures for 2005–06 are anticipated soon, but it is unlikely that ACC will have been any more open during 2005–06, given its record, and given the opportunities that SA laws provide. It is highly probable that, with half

the Authority's Board to comprise council elected members, this culture of secrecy will be imported into the Authority.

2. The draft charter (reflecting the Local Government Act) allows anyone to deem any document provided to Authority members as 'confidential', which then means that it cannot be shared with members of the public. Both the charter and the Act are silent as to how any document may be deemed to be 'no longer confidential'. In the council's long history (and that of all of its sub-committees), once a document is deemed confidential, it's never seen again, and never discussed in public.
3. The Authority's Board must provide an annual report, but only to the council and the minister. There is no provision for anyone else to receive it. Presumably, circulation may be at the whim of members or the minister, but the charter appears highly restrictive and the way is open for only the council and the minister to receive it.

Has Adelaide progressed since the optimistic days following the 2002 elections, in creating a body with real power to protect the integrity of the Parklands? The answer would have to be a disappointed 'no'.

## **SUB-STORY: Test cases show how the Park Lands Authority might reveal its flaws**

Let's look at how a current test case might be treated by the new Park Lands Authority.

As all Adelaide knows, Adelaide City Council has plans to erect a three-storey grandstand in the middle of Victoria Park for a motor racing hub. It's a plan that is feasible under new wording in its recently-approved development plan for that part of the Parklands, because it wrote the words for the plan soon after it paid for the grandstand concept, and the government rubber-stamped them. This plan was discussed, and \$54 000 was

approved to pay for concept drawings, in confidential meetings of council in 2004. Under the proposed new arrangements for the new Authority, council would remain free to continue to pursue any similar plans and activities, in confidential discussions. Worse, if it chooses to keep these discussions confidential under the provisions of the Local Government Act (under the standard excuse that they are of a commercial nature) it is unlikely that its Authority council members would reveal the 'preliminary' detail to the other half of the Authority (members nominated by the minister). It would all remain a secret.

A second example highlights further absurdity. In 2003, the South Australian Cricket Association approached council for 'in principle' support for the establishment of a cricket academy, using its leases near Montefiore Hill and in the western Parklands to erect permanent grandstands and lights. All discussions, except the 'in principle' endorsement at the finale, were held in confidence, using the Local Government Act's provisions. Under the proposed model for the Authority, not only is it unlikely that the council would reveal such details to the Authority but, even if it did (under the confidentiality provisions), the five councillors who make up half the Authority's Board would be 'commenting and advising' on their own deliberations occurring elsewhere, in council. And all it would need to have its own deliberations endorsed would be one additional vote from the ministerially-chosen other half of the Authority's Board. One can clearly see that the 'arm's-length' feature that so many called for after the 2002 elections will never be delivered through this model.

© John Bridgland

*John Bridgland is honorary secretary of the North Adelaide Society, a residents' and traders' group of 36 years' standing, the longest-running body of its type in metropolitan Adelaide. North Adelaide is surrounded by Parklands. Contact: <jbeditor@senet.com.au>*

## **NEXT NEWSLETTER COPY DEADLINE:**

31 January 2007

Always in search of pithy articles, educational information and comment on current issues

# A Christmas story, or not—Mistletoe

As a young, shy, public-schoolboy with little experience of dealing with the opposite s-x, I was eternally grateful for the small green sprigs of foliage with their translucent white berries.

Hanging strategically from an English Christmas-time door lintel they were the key that helped unlock my shyness, and turned distant cousins into the kissing kind.

Yes, mistletoe had a lot to answer for!

Fast-track forward five or so decades, and the pernicious parasite raises an entirely different emotion in my otherwise 'greenie' breast.

The change of heart began back in the early Nineties, when our family became the unofficial custodians of an overgrown, largely neglected graveyard to the south of Clare. With the gravestones dating back to the late 1860s came an abandoned Bible Christian church, the ruins of a manse-cum-schoolroom, several other deserted cottage remains—all that survived of the village of Skillingolee—and a hundred ironstone acres of rough, hilly 'backyard'.

A major attraction of the rural retreat was the dense woodland which had miraculously survived a series of bushfires that had swept the valley in previous generations.

Enter the mistletoes.

Within three years, trees were succumbing by the score to huge garlands of box mistletoe, and only a cherry-picker, two men with chainsaws and a \$2500 payout for two days of parasite eradication saved a fraction of the otherwise healthy backdrop to our slice of Australian history.

All of which is a long-winded way of explaining my current preoccupation with a parasite which, I believe, has the potential for decimating our state's greenery, including our native foliage which is such an integral part of Adelaide's Parklands.

The 'experts' disagree. I'm told I am being alarmist. Mistletoe, they say, is an essential link in nature's chain. Mistletoe, they say (I believe wrongly) is not a death sentence for a healthy tree, which can

support the parasite with no adverse effects. All of which leads me to believe that they have not taken a recent walk around Morialta Falls or up the Waterfall Gully walk to Mount Lofty lookout.

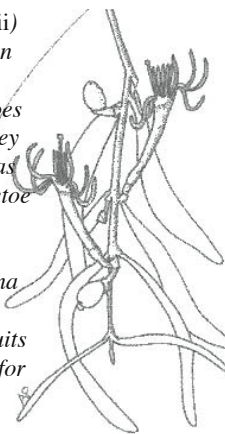
Others, like Parkside resident and ex-deputy director of the Botanic Garden, Mr Ed McAlister, have offered support, and evidence, that mistletoe, in its many and varied forms, is fast becoming a menace widespread from the slopes of the Flinders Ranges to the vineyards of Padthaway and the Coonawarra. And, he says, some species have learnt to live off exotics.

Closer to home, Mitcham Council has virtually admitted defeat in its control of the parasite. The number of trees in the Mount Lofty Ranges succumbing to mistletoe stress has reached alarming proportions.

And in Unley, the council recently approved the removal of a whole street of trees infested beyond hope of survival. The latter prompted me to letterbox 3000 homes in the Parkside area with a newsletter somewhat provocatively titled 'Mistletoes—the kiss of death'. The resultant resident inquiry phone-in

Box mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*) (left), together with the harlequin mistletoe (*Lysiana exocarpi*) (right), are the common mistletoes found on the Adelaide Plain. They are native to Australia, which has 60 species. The harlequin mistletoe is protected.

*Eucalyptus*, *acacia* and *casuarina* trees are the normal hosts. Mistletoe leaves, flowers and fruits provide important food sources for birds, insects and possums.



had a dramatic impact on the council switchboard!

Now, I am considering calling for the promotion of a 'mistletoe watch' to ensure Unley does not end up like Mitcham.

Meanwhile, I believe that, unless we act to control mistletoe, the greenery of our state is in danger.

I stress the word 'control'.

I am not advocating eradication. Apart from it being physically unattainable, I agree with the experts that there are very real benefits for native wildlife. But to close one's eyes to the population explosion of the parasite, especially the ubiquitous box variety, is to court disaster.

And one has to ask the question: if there is no threat to our vegetation, why the need for the 'Living with mistletoes' documents produced by the Department for Environment and Heritage for, among other areas, the Mount Lofty Ranges and the Clare and Gilbert Valleys?

Meanwhile, the good news for the City of Adelaide is that only a few isolated outbreaks of mistletoe have had to be dealt with in recent years. According to a technical officer in the ACC's parks division, there is no council mistletoe treatment policy in place—and thankfully no recent reported infestations.

But that does not mean that there is any cause for complacency. Be alert, if not alarmed. Mistletoe birds, the chief broadcasters of the pest's sticky seeds (although other native birds and some introduced species are involved as well), don't acknowledge boundaries, and havens such as Mitcham are only a few wingflaps away!

Mike Hudson



# USE OUR E-MAIL SERVICE

Some people have already seen the light (pun intended) and sent in their e-mail addresses. If you would like to receive the *Parklands News* by e-mail as a PDF, fill in the form below and mail it to:

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Association Inc  
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*Gunta Groves*

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## More ominous signs

### Full marks to the ACC

Recently, the SAJC took the liberty of putting up a couple of signs in Victoria Park that were both illegal and offensive (see photo on right). One e-mail to the ACC resulted in the promise to remove the signs. Within three days, they were gone.

### Kevin Naughton

Perhaps I'm overly sensitive but I detect a hidden agenda when Kevin Naughton makes statements about the Parklands. In an article promoting a News Ltd website (*The Advertiser* 10 September p 21), he describes the Civic Trust's annual awards and brickbats contenders which include the V8 Supercar infrastructure in the Parklands.

Kevin Naughton can't help himself. He says:

*Supercar Race infrastructure in the parklands. For five months of the year, the parklands become a building site as the stands go up and then come down. **Do we need a more sympathetic solution, or should we grin and bear it?***

The emphasis is mine. I wonder what his 'sympathetic solution' is? Could it possibly be a two-faced grandstand? Regardless, the Civic Trust gave a brickbat to the ugliness of the car racing infrastructure, for which we congratulate the Trust.



And another Kevin Naughton pearl was found in the *Sunday Mail* of 17 September (p 50) when he jumped on the bandwagon calling for a new stadium for Adelaide to be sited in the Parklands in the area west of the Morphett Street Bridge. He maintains the myth that this area can be used for such a thing.

### New stadium

You may remember Paul Starick as one of the journalists who offended me in their articles about Victoria Park (*Parklands News* June 2006 p 5, March 2006 p 6). He is at it again with calls for a new stadium to be built on the Parklands.

In *The Advertiser* on 6 September 2006 (p 18) and again on 13 September (p18), Paul Starick describes the supposed inadequacies of AAMI Stadium and

argues for a new facility or 'a substantially redeveloped' Adelaide Oval. In the second article he provides Melbourne's Telstra Dome as the shining example of what we should be striving for.

So far there is not much to get excited about. However, towards the end he says:

*The area of railway yards, just north of the West Tce and North Tce intersection, already has been floated publicly as the site for a Telstra Dome-style stadium.*

*But the Government and sports administrators have lacked the foresight or courage to even investigate this or other options.*

Now it's time to get agitated. The area he describes above is alienated Parklands (Tulya Wodli—Park 27) that should be clawed back from the castor oil plants and remediated. APPA has targeted the area for a concerted campaign to achieve this.

Another concern is Starick's assertion that the area 'already has been floated publicly as the site for a Telstra Dome-style stadium'. Who by and when? Certainly, people who know their city would not be silly enough to suggest such an intrusion into Parklands. But, like a dog with a bone, just recently (*The Advertiser* 27 November, pp 1, 4 and the Editorial), he repeated the whole thing again.

*Gunta Groves*

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM 2006–07

Adelaide Parklands Preservation Assoc Inc PO Box 3040 Rundle Mall Adelaide SA 5000

Name .....

Address .....

Telephone ..... E-mail ..... Date .....

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### OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE TO ENSURE THAT:

- the Parklands be available for use by the general public
- the public should, so far as practicable, have free and unrestricted access to the Parklands
- the Parklands should be reserved as a place for public recreation, leisure and enjoyment
- alienated areas of the Parklands are restored for recreational use, preferably as open space
- the character of the Parklands as a place dividing the City of Adelaide from the suburbs should be preserved
- the Parklands should be preserved and maintained in a manner that enhances their special place in the design of the City of Adelaide
- the amenity of the Parklands is not impaired by inappropriate development of nearby lands.

I agree to be bound by the Constitution of the Association. Signature .....

Please make cheque/money order payable to: Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association Inc (*not* 'APPA')

Send to: Adelaide Parklands Preservation Assoc Inc, PO Box 3040 Rundle Mall Adelaide SA 5000

12/06

### Committee 2006–2007

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Deputy President: Ian Gilfillan  
Secretary: Kyle Penick  
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*The way to love  
anything is to realise  
that it might be lost.*

*GK Chesterton (1874–1936)*

Merry  
Xmas to  
all APPA  
members

\*\*\*\*\*

### Contact

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31 January 2007

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#### Information about APPA:

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#### Membership:

Membership of the Association is open to all who support the objectives of the Association. Members receive the *Parklands News* four times a year.

The membership year is 1 April to 31 March.