

Friends of Banyule

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Minutes of Annual General Meeting

24 November 2011

**7.30pm – 9.00pm, held at the Old Shire Offices
60 Beverley Road Heidelberg**

7.40pm Marion Ware welcomed to all members and guests and provided recognition to the traditional owners of the land in the spirit of reconciliation. An overview of the evening's agenda was followed by thanks to volunteers, members and the steering committee for their hard work during 2011. Julianne Bell (Convenor of Protectors of Public Lands) was unable to attend the meeting due to illness but sent her best wishes. An acknowledgement of donations provided by individuals and other groups during 2011 was read out as follows:

Warringal Conservation Society \$300 donation
Australian Education Union \$1000 donation
Anti Ring Road Action \$429.97
Viewbank Primary School for collecting \$424.70
Individual FOB members

Overview of campaigns and activities in 2011

North East Link Campaign

You will recall that the previous state government was committed to the construction of the NE Link between Bulleen and Greensborough. We wrote to incoming Roads and Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder and asked for a meeting on the project to put the case that the project should be scrapped. On 11 May representatives of the Steering Committee and Transport Parliamentary Secretary Edward O'Donohue inspected Banyule Flats followed by a meeting. We followed the meeting up with a letter further again outlining our concerns and received confirmation that the NE Link was not an election commitment but would be evaluated as part of a metropolitan planning strategy review the government was to undertake.

On 15 July Committee members met with Planning Minister (and local MP) Matthew Guy to further pursue our concerns about the proposed NE Link Freeway as well as a range of issues including the Metropolitan Planning Strategy and objectives and principles underlying the Victorian Government's new policy initiative and supporting programs;

The Minister was generous with his time and showed genuine interest in our concerns, ideas and proposals. His words were that there was “no appetite for the NE Link and no funds available from the federal government” We asked the Minister to confirm his statement in writing and come back to us with further advice regarding our concerns.

This finally evoked a response from Roads minister Terry Mulder confirming again that whilst the NE Link was not an election commitment of the Liberal-National Party coalition "it would ultimately play an important role in better linking major industrial areas to enhance Victoria's economic competitiveness, as well as provide for Melbourne's future population growth by linking residential and employment areas." The Minister reiterated that the North East Link would be considered in the development of a new Metropolitan Planning Strategy.

In more recent days the government has released its 2011 funding bid to Infrastructure Australia. It does include a funding bid for the East-West road tunnel between the Eastern Freeway and the Western Ring Road. The North East Link is not listed but lobby groups such as the RACV are continuing to campaign for it.

Notwithstanding claims that the North East Link would be a freight route if it were to be built it would significantly increase car traffic in Banyule. It is also troubling that the position of the Banyule City Council on the project is fairly weak.

In connection with campaigning against NE Link we also supported and attended the Heidelberg Transport Forums arranged and coordinated by Transition Towns Banyule and held in August and October. Transitions Town Banyule is being very creative in addressing specific sustainable transport initiatives to take cars off roads and increase public and active transport - and that local residents can play a part in. Thank you Mary and Penny for your ongoing collaboration with FOB

FOB submissions to government inquiries

In January we made a detailed Submission to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council as part of their Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation for Public Land. The Submission focuses on the adverse effect on public land that the proposed North East Link Freeway would have, the subsequent destruction of existing public open space and parklands and the importance for protection of the environment, flora and fauna, our culture and community well-being.

In March we provided a submission to the Federal Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia for the Commonwealth Sustainable Population Strategy. In Banyule, we clearly lack infrastructure to deal with the mounting pressures that population increases put on our transport systems. Areas for recreation and general community well-being are also decreasing. Our Submission focuses on these two aspects and the need to protect the environmental assets of Banyule City for current and future generations.

Planning and heritage issues

-Heritage Listing of Banyule Flats

After much lobbying for the past 3 years, Banyule City Council finally set aside \$50K for a study into heritage listing for Banyule Flats. The study will commence in early 2012 and we are hopeful that it will lead to National recognition of the area on heritage grounds to afford some level of protection against any future development that would put the area and its wildlife and environment at risk.

Virtual Tour - In February this year Friends of Banyule formed a working group to develop a virtual tour about Banyule Flats its history, wildlife, involvement with the community including a photo graphic library. This has been a huge project and not without its technical challenges. I am very pleased to say that we have nearly completed all work and we will be able to reveal the tour which will be housed on the Friends of Banyule website over the next couple of weeks. This will not be a static tour and we invite everyone to contribute through their painting, photography, writing or observations to enrich this documentary evidence of how important the Banyule Flats and Warringal wetlands are for our community. Thank you to the working group members: Anthea, Pauline, Gary, Vivienne, Lene, Howard, Shirley, John and Dianne for their passion and creativity.

-Banyule Homestead Campaign

Friends of Banyule lodged a submission with Heritage Victoria on 26th May, objecting to the subdivision of the heritage listed Banyule Homestead and the construction of three two storey townhouses in its grounds.

We had discussions with Council, Heritage Victoria and the National Trust. Extensive lobbying of all councilors occurred, leading up to the Council meeting on the 6th June. Mass letterboxing by local residents including Max Congdon and Leon Le Rossignol and emailing by FOB to Councilors, members, other community groups and the press, helped publicise the issue leading up to the Council meeting. Council eventually moved a strong motion objecting to the application on Heritage grounds, resulting in a submission being lodged by Council supporting FOB, other community groups and the public.

We also wrote to the Minister for Planning with a copy to the Premier. This letter was interestingly replied to by Heritage Vic CEO, Jim Gardner, justifying their decision making process and attaching a copy of the Heritage Act. The Committee is still in discussion regarding the campaign and the process from here and how best to keep the issue before the public.

The current status of this is that Council still needs to provide approval of a planning permit under the Planning & Environment Act. We urge everybody to write to, phone fax or e mail, their local Councilor and Parliamentary representatives regarding this.

-Structure planning in Ivanhoe

Friends of Banyule Steering committee members have provided a submission on the Ivanhoe Structure Plan that is currently being developed by the Banyule City Council. The apparent purpose of the structure plan is to provide greater certainty in relation to the built environment in the Ivanhoe activity centre, which has already seen significant medium rise developments approved.

As the responsibility for planning has been progressively removed from local government by successive state governments, the scope for developers to establish projects that do not meet predictable standards in local planning schemes has been extended. This is a major source of uncertainty and compromises the integrity and purpose of the planning scheme itself.

Of equal importance is the fact that whilst the state government calls for and insists on consolidation in activity centers both in established suburbs as well as outer Melbourne the experience has been that it does not provide the necessary improvements in state based services, especially transport. The local public transport service and infrastructure in Ivanhoe is substandard for present requirements, let alone for a population increase estimated to be in the thousands. There is an emerging threat that we will end up with growing population and greater car dependency and congestion

A call to arms on planning and transport

There is no doubt that there are many initiatives that should and could be taken by the Victorian government, the Banyule City Council, employers and by individual residents to improve liveability in Banyule and take the pressure off our natural environment. The Austin complex, for example, is estimated to generate about 20,000 vehicle trips a day, and is growing. Any ambition we might have to pedestrianise Heidelberg will go no-where whilst this is going on. Many of these trips are transferable to public transport now. Instead the Austin is building another multi-storey car park and the commuter car park at Heidelberg railway station is full of Austin employees by 7 am every day. A vast amount of space in Heidelberg now devoted to parked cars could be applied to much more socially and economically advantageous uses. Meanwhile, most of the 20,000 school children in Banyule are driven to school every day. It is time for the education department, the government and local residents to get onto this one too.

We got nothing in May for the Hurstbridge line when the new rail timetables were introduced and there is no sign at this stage of the delivery of reasonable quality bus services in much of Banyule.

This pattern of neglect of public transport and/or indifference is repeated right across Melbourne. If the government was serious on these issues it would be abandoning the building of further roads and freeways instead of continuing to plan for new ones, like North East Link. It is time for us to get our thinking caps on to apply pressure and to promote ideas in areas of greatest advantage. I hope this report has inspired you to not just be an observer but to be actively involved with the campaign to save Banyule Flats and to fight for sustainable transport solutions for Banyule. To join our working group and to be an active member of Friends of Banyule, to be the change!

Treasurer's report

The treasurer's report was prepared by Sally Leslie, Treasurer Friends of Banyule and read out by Dennis O'Connell, Secretary of Friends of Banyule.

FRIENDS OF BANYULE

Bank Account Balance 01/07/2010 B/F **4295.45**

Receipts

Memberships	1385
T shirt Sales	180
Sign Sales	495
Donations	1134
Donations Public meeting	1461.05
Flyer Donations	370.84
Donations Anti Ring Road	429.97
AEU La Trobe Plenty Region	1000
Warringal Conversation Society donation	300
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	6755.86

Payments

Centrepoint	-890.4
Centre Ivanhoe Room Hire Public Meeting	-1932.4
Concept Plastics - Sign Production	-924
Countonline Virtual Tour photo's	-646.25
The Centre Ivanhoe - Public meeting	-227.9
Flyers Public meeting	-366.04
Consumer Affairs Annual Statement	-41.8
Counton Greeting cards etc	-258.45
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	-5287.24

Bank Balance as at 30/06/2011 **5764.07**

Election

The election was conducted by returning officer Vivienne Ortega. In accordance with section 20 & 21 of the Rules of Association, the Friends of Banyule committee of management consists of:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Secretary, and
- two ordinary members

each of whom shall be elected at the annual general meeting of the Association in each year.

Pursuant to Section 23 (4) of the Rules, if the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated shall be deemed to be elected.

I have received duly signed nomination forms for each of the six positions on the Committee of Management for Friends of Banyule. As there are no further nominations, I declare the following persons so elected;

Marion Ware – President
Ian Hundley – Vice President
Dennis O’Connell – Secretary
Kristina Bucak – Treasurer
Mary Merkenich - Committee Member
John D’Aloia – Committee Member

Congratulations to the elected members.

Keynote speaker Michael Buxton

Associate Professor Dr Michael Buxton of RMIT University is a visionary planner and strong advocate of the Green Wedges. Dr Buxton formerly headed the process for developing Australia’s National Greenhouse Strategy, and the group responsible for the development and implementation of environmental policy in Victoria. Michael Buxton has contributed extensively to government policy. He is a former chairperson of the Premier’s Green Wedge Working Party which advised the Victorian government on the introduction of a legislated urban growth boundary and revised green wedge zones for Melbourne’s green belt. He is a prolific media contributor on contemporary issues related to planning and the environment, including the green wedges and the urban growth boundary.

Closing

Dennis O’Connell closed the meeting with an inspiring address thanking volunteers and FOB committee members for their creativity and energy during 2011. He also asked members to join the steering committee in 2012. Guests and members were then invited to share food, tea & coffee.

Meeting closed 9.30pm