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## PRESIDENT'S AGM REPORT: AUGUST 2019 TO NOVEMBER 2020

### INTRODUCTION

2019 went well for CDEA, the beginning of 2020 was fine and we had the February General Meeting. In March the world was hit by COVID19 and everything changed as governments struggled to contain the pandemic. One change was restricting the numbers of people that could sit in one room. This meant that General Meetings including the June World Environment Day Celebrations and the AGM were put on hold.

The CDEA Management Committee ventured forth into new technology and had a couple of Zoom online meetings. Fortunately, Queensland did quite well in managing the pandemic and the committee started having meetings at the Pooh Corner Environment Centre where we could space ourselves out, open the door and all the windows and BYO morning tea. Restrictions have lifted even more now and we can hold our AGM, albeit three months late, but that's fine by the Department of Fair Trading, under the circumstances.

***In the last 15 months, despite COVID19, there has still been plenty of work to keep the committee busy. Some new issues, other ongoing ones.***

### WACOL STATE LAND ISSUE

The saga of the Wacol State land being handed over to Brisbane City Council drags on.

This issue has stumbled along since 2005 when state government promised that 200 hectares of the land between the prisons and Wolston Creek would go over to public open space and recreation after the huge Westgate development proposal had been cancelled because of community dissent.

After several changes of government and the passing of many years, it appears the project has stagnated from the government side.

However, members of the CDEA Management Committee are still following it up. In January Jess Pugh MP arranged a meeting between us and government advisors. Some very important issues arose and it was obvious that the project had definitely disappeared into the ether. However, our meeting brought the issue back onto the table.

Basically, the state government feels no reason to stand by the agreements made in 2006. The bureaucrats were not aware of the terms of the agreement, of council's Wildlife Zone in Wacol or even of the approximately 1350 kangaroos that live there.

They wanted something that would give a financial return and suggested developing the large central field for industrial purposes, perhaps a warehouse. Most of the rest of the land is already planted up with a huge number of council's two million trees and not suitable for more development.

The proposal to make 103 hectares industrial was completely unacceptable to us. We made our dissatisfaction clear and offered to take the government officials to visit the site. A couple of months later, Jess Pugh MP took some different bureaucrats for a site visit.

Unfortunately, a new issue has now arisen. State government had leased some sports land to council many years ago and recently wanted it back for its own uses. However, council wouldn't give it back, I don't know the details. Now, State government doesn't want to lease the Wacol land to council for fear that the same thing might happen again.

I will point out that the original community group agreement with state government and council was for the Wacol state land to be **handed over to Council, not leased**. One of the things that seems to have been forgotten by State Government.

Everything went on hold before the last state election took place in October so we will have to follow up on this further. Once again, the Management Committee will seek a meeting with Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk who was represented in the original discussions and came to the final agreement meeting. The land is in her electorate.

CDEA is still promoting the land be kept as public open space which would protect the kangaroos and other wildlife there. It could become a substantial natural area if it were connected to other council environmental reserves nearby to make a wonderful 400 hectare bushland park.

### **GREEN BRIDGE AND PATHWAY THROUGH STATE LAND**

Another project was in an adjoining area last year. Council proposed a recreational pathway running from the Brisbane River at Bellbowrie to Wacol Station Road. This was part of the Green Bridge proposal between Wacol and Bellbowrie. However, the people of Bellbowrie were not keen on a bridge and it was cancelled. It was a pity to lose that pathway through the open Wacol Corrective Services land.

### **PROJECT KANGAROO EXTENDED TO END OF SUMNERS ROAD**

Another project also in the Wacol area was Project Kangaroo. In 2005 CDEA, started work on the issue of reducing kangaroo deaths on Grindle and Wacol Station Roads in Wacol. Wolston Road had not been built back then.

As a direct result of RSPCA and CDEA actions bemoaning the death of so many kangaroos and wallabies in that area, BCC created the **Wacol Wildlife Zone**. This is now complete and little bits are being added as the need arises and as funding becomes available.

Despite requests from CDEA and the local community, funding wasn't available for wildlife signs in Sumners Road, so a very talented community member made her own signs and put them up.

It was winter and walkabout time for male kangaroos and wallabies, and more of them than usual were crossing Sumners Road. CDEA and the local community made further representations to council still without success.

However, council did put up four electronic signs: "SLOW DOWN, WATCH FOR KOALAS". There was great excitement and a lot of comments on the local FB's 4074 Community & Beyond page!

Apparently, the sign contractors had got their koalas and kangaroos mixed up! Within days, permanent, fixed kangaroo warning signs had been installed along Sumners Road, no more waiting and hopefully a safer road for kangaroos and people.

***The committee has also been working on the redevelopment of Oxley Secondary College site, off Seventeen Mile Rocks Road.***

### **OXLEY SECONDARY COLLEGE PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA**

The college was closed over 18 years ago and nothing really happened there until in 2016 when Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) put a proposal for development of the site to the community, but it was not well-received.

A community panel was formed to address the issue and Ed Parker and I are on that panel representing CDEA. The panel worked for several months with the local community and proposed a number of uses for the site and did a huge amount of site research which we presented to EDQ. A while later they presented a concept proposal for the site to the panel and the community and recorded our comments. EDQ went back to develop the planning of the project.

State government declared this project a **Priority Development Area (PDA)** meaning it does not have to adhere to Brisbane City Council laws and planning. In addition, EDQ is bound by state government law to make its projects commercially viable.

After many months of hard negotiations with Brisbane City Council, the State Government agreed to hand over several hectares of the Oxley PDA open space to council. It also undertook to remediate the steep slope below Blackheath Road which is prone to sink holes and landslides. State government has also undertaken to remediate the state environmentally protected bushland area on the west of the site and the sports oval. Weeds are being removed as well as asbestos.

Generally speaking, the ecological report was dubious with many errors.

The seemingly unnecessary removal of many native trees has been extremely disappointing. Fewer than one third of the native trees will be retained, and this is subject to site remediation. The scale of the clearance is unnecessary and will adversely affect several aspects of the ecology and amenity of the land, including wildlife habitat, soil erosion and recreational use.

Many new plants will go in but many are only ground-covers, they cannot nearly compensate for the loss of well-established trees. Several species proposed are not native to Australia, let alone to South-east Queensland.

In the final proposal, EDQ undertook to divide the south-west section of the site into larger housing blocks than on the rest of the site, in order that the enormous Eucalyptus trees there would be retained. Unfortunately, in the final plan, practically all of the trees are going, which is a huge loss. Several would have been 200 years old or more. No explanation has been given to the community. Other vegetation clearing has been undertaken that was not presented to the public.

Some good news however, in September last year, the magnificent Crows Ash trees on the entrance road off Seventeen Mile Rocks Road were given a reprieve and are no longer being removed. CDEA's submission on the proposal, and many others, had recommended retaining them.

***Moving on to the smaller projects CDEA has dealt with over the last 15 months.***

### **67 CHAPMAN PLACE, OXLEY**

One was 67 Chapman Place in Oxley. It is a large block bordering the Brisbane to Ipswich railway line with a large area of remnant bushland. Most of the block is classified as an Endangered Regional Ecosystem by State Government. It also had a Powerful Owl living on it, an endangered bird.

Last year the owner submitted an application whereby the one block of land would be subdivided into 4. It entailed the removal and damaging of some endangered vegetation. CDEA put in a submission asking the proposal be refused.

Local residents asked Lord Mayor Schrinner to buy it on behalf of Brisbane City Council but sadly this could not be arranged and the development application was approved. There is a large Environmental Protection Zone which some locals consider a small win, **provided it is enforced.**

### **LORIKEET PARK NESTING BOXES**

Moving across to Mount Ommaney: several months ago, the committee asked council if it would replace the nesting boxes in Lorikeet Park, opposite the Mount Ommaney Centre. There were originally about 45 that had been installed by the developers of Mount Ommaney Central Parklands when they had cleared a large number of hollow-bearing trees for the housing. The nesting boxes have since deteriorated or fallen down.

Council said we should apply for a grant to do it and adhere to stringent requirements including monitoring the boxes regularly. These requirements were well beyond CDEA's capabilities. We raised the issue again in the middle of the year with Councillor Hutton. Council has now agreed to fund the project including maintenance which is fantastic! In addition, Cr Hutton has negotiated with the local Men's Shed to make the boxes and we are looking for a suitable monitoring camera. A good result.

***Another good result is the rebirth of the WESTLAKE RIVERHILLS BUSHCARE GROUP***

Ed Parker has restarted the Westlake Riverhills Bushcare Group after a long time of little to no activity. The previous leader could no longer run the group. However, after letter-dropping the area and using FB's 4074 Community & Beyond, several new members have joined up and the local cub group has become involved, which is lovely. Westlake Riverhills Bushcare Group was the first bushcare group to start in the Jamboree Ward. There are seven bushcare groups in Jamboree Ward and several nearby.

If you would like to spend two hours once a month, working to rehabilitate the valuable local bushland areas, making them a good habitat place for wildlife and a pleasant recreational place for people, please contact me.

***A project that has taken a bit of work, has been UPDATING THE CDEA WEBSITE.***

It again operates well after suffering several hitches. Have a look at it, it is very eye-catching and interesting. [www.cdea.org.au](http://www.cdea.org.au) Many thanks to Brian for all his work, it has had great results!

***Finally, an AWARD FOR TRICIA AND WARNER DAKIN!***

The Warners were presented a Jamboree Community Award at Cr Matthew Bourke's Christmas Party at the end of 2019!

Both are very deserving of this with many contributions to the local community. Warner led the Concerned Residents Against More Prisons (CRAMP) that stopped a prison being built right on the opposite side of Wolston Creek from Riverhills. He and Tricia helped to get the State Government to give the land on the southern side of Wolston Creek to council for public space and they started and ran the Wolston Creek Bushcare Group there for many years. In addition, Tricia has worked for a long time for Meals on Wheels. Both Tricia and Warner have been long term members of CDEA including on the Management Committee. There have been many other contributions as well, so CONGRATULATIONS Tricia and Warner!

**SINCERE THANKS:**

- to the Management Committee for their ongoing commitment and work: Ed Parker, Ray Lane, Di Ruffles, Warner and Tricia Dakin, Vaughan Kippers and myself;
- to Brisbane City Council for the environmental grant that keeps us going;
- to Vaughan Kippers for the newsletters that have been our only communications with CDEA members and friends since COVID19 started;
- to Di Ruffles who monitors the mail box;
- to all the members, politicians and friends that support CDEA!

**The NEXT PUBLIC MEETING** will be on **25 February** presented by Professor Myron Zalucki from UQ on butterflies in the urban environment. The venue is yet to be finalised.

**THE MID-YEAR GENERAL MEETING** is planned for the **6th June 2021**, the 5th June being World Environment Day. It will be at the Pooh Corner Environment Centre, all being well.

**TO CLOSE**

**Many thanks for supporting CDEA!**  
**Shealagh Walker, President**

<p><b>Thanks to Brisbane City Council for their ongoing and important support.</b></p>
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