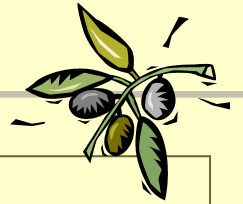


Friends of the HV McKay Memorial Gardens

JAN 2012

SUMMER 2012 NEWSLETTER

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Gardens at Risk

Regional Rail Link project proposals

On Friday 9 December several Sunshine community groups with an interest in the Heritage listed HV McKay Memorial Gardens met with Regional Rail Link (RRL) representatives at Sunshine.

At that meeting it was revealed that RRL's preferred proposal would result in the following impacts on the Gardens:

- Moving the recently restored gates up to 20 metres
- Acquiring land along the Anderson Road frontage
- Removing the 4.5 metre heritage listed pedestrian footbridge from across the train tracks
- Building a new 7 metre pedestrian footbridge with two lifts
- Noise increase of at least 5 decibels

Attendees also noted that no investigation has been done into the effects of vibration via the increased train traffic. This is particularly worrying for the recently-underpinned historic Presbyterian Church, situated in the Gardens and probably any residential properties situated close to the tracks.

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The community groups present expressed concern that this information was not presented to the broader community as part of the RRL information sessions held in late November 2011 (two weeks ago). Fortunately, for Sunshine residents, the Heritage status of the Gardens means that the public will be given an opportunity to review the finalised proposal and make comment to Heritage Victoria once it receives a permit application from RRL.

Members of the Friends of the HV McKay Memorial Gardens, the Sunshine Residents and Ratepayers Association and the Sunshine Historical Society were boosted by the promise that their input and feedback would be taken back to the design team and hope that the next meeting, in the new year, presents a reconsidered design with no impact on the nationally significant HV McKay Memorial Gardens.

For more detail, read the *President's Update* on Page 2.

AGM Dec 2011

The Friends of the McKay Memorial Gardens was held on 3 Dec 2011 at the meeting rooms of the McKay gardens Church. The treasurer's report was received and position holders were all returned:

President: Catherine McDonald

Treasurer: Helen Reed
/Secretary

Media: Michelle Edwards

2012 AGM: Saturday 26 Nov 2012 10-11am

Ordinary Meetings for 2012 were scheduled:

- Saturday 25 Feb 2012 10-11am
- Saturday 26 May 2012 10-11am
- Saturday 25 Aug 2012 10-11am

President's Update

Happy New Year to all. It appears that for *The Friends* 2012 may be a year of lobbying.

As per the Regional Rail Link (RRL) article above, we were happy to harness support from a number of members of the Friends Group, the Sunshine Historical Society and the Sunshine Residents and Ratepayers Association at our first meeting with the RRL consortium. Various people were in attendance from Brimbank Council, (RRL) and Abigroup Thies JV.

The RRL authority presented its 3-D computer model and a number of maps of the area including the grade separation along Anderson Road and rail re-alignment and footbridge. In addition there were also preliminary drawings of the design for the new footbridge. None of this material is available to the public and we were unable to take any away with us.

So what is the upshot? There will be a major cutting at the western corner of the gardens to allow Anderson Road to pass beneath the rail line. There will be no widening of Anderson road. King Edwards Ave will be cut off from Anderson Road. A shared pedestrian bike path and bridge across Anderson Road is to be constructed at the western corner of the gardens. This will include switch back approaches approximately 150-200 metres long on each side of the road to accommodate the level change. In addition the current proposal is to widen the footpath on the western corner to three metres. The justification offered for this was to accommodate Victorian regulations for standard infrastructure construction.

The net result is a proposal to either move the garden gate posts and gates inward several metres (the authority's view is that may they move them up to 20 metres) and acquire that land from the gardens to institute the footpath. Alternatively their proposal is to move the gateposts only slightly and have the outermost post remain in the middle of the footpath.

"..move the gates..... and acquire that land from the gardens to institute the footpath"



RRL proposal as presented to the public (Gardens are at top left)

The current footbridge across the rail line is to be removed entirely and replaced with a bridge that will be seven metres high rather than the current four and will be nearly twice as large. In addition a lift will be installed at each end the new bridge to meet current access regulations. From the drawings presented at the meeting it was difficult to tell very much about the actual design of the bridge however, it appears to be a completely enclosed box like structure using perforated metal (or possibly some sort of mesh) for the enclosure. The deck of the bridge appears to be a single concrete span.

Initially, there will be no sound mitigation measures.

Catherine McDonald - President

Read *The Friends* Position on Page 3



Photo taken October 2011

The Friends' Position on RRL

For many years, the gardens have been hanging on to what remains of the original built form by a thread. In reality there are only three original elements remaining:

- the garden's connection with the Sunshine estate across Anderson Road
- the footbridge over the rail line
- the gate posts and gate on the western corner. (The single metal fence post isn't really significant enough to count).

The RRL's current proposal will sever the last remaining links with the garden's historical past. We will have references to our history (through signs) but not the actual history itself. The reality of Australia's oldest industrial garden will be gone.

At the Friends Meeting on 3rd of December it was decided that we would fight as hard as we could for the principle of non-interference in relation to the gate posts and gate and we put that position to the RRL in our meeting with them. The Friends are not persuaded that there is any justification for the interference proposed. Instead what we encountered was bureaucratic rigidity and poor, unimaginative design.

The situation of the footbridge is even more precarious although there appears to be even less justification for interference.



The heritage-listed footbridge

As far as the RRL is concerned the removal of the footbridge is not in doubt and discussions with Heritage Victoria have been under-way for about 12 months. The removal of the footbridge is not related to the grade separation on Anderson Road but is justified as “future-proofing” the freight corridor for ‘double height freight trains’.

Of course, it can make no difference at all to rail traffic until and unless the Sunshine overpass (Hampshire Road) is moved.

The Friends will endeavour to submit objections to the removal of the bridge when the application for its removal is submitted to Heritage Victoria. In the mean time we will seek to have some input into the design of the proposed replacement. (The current design is ugly, oversized and insensitive to its surroundings). What is it with these people and size? Everything has to be huge and preferably made of concrete!

I'm afraid the connection between gardens and King Edwards Ave (such as it was) has been now completely lost. The most we can do is record that fact into the history of the gardens.

What can you do?

We are seeking members who are available to turn up to a photo call in the gardens for the press (most likely during working hours unfortunately but usually very short - only takes 15-30 minutes) - the more faces the better. If you would like to be put on this list please [send](#) your phone number and any times you definitely are or are not available. We need you.

We are also after images of many different types of footbridges and/or suggestions for what you might like to see in a new footbridge (if we cannot save our old one).

Once plans are lodged by RRL with Heritage Victoria, the community will be invited to have a say. The more people who write a letter, send an email, attend a consultation, the better chance we have of minimising impact on the Gardens.

Keep an eye on the McKay Gardens [Blog](#) for updates and more information on community consultations.

Environmental Achievement Award

The winners of the 2012 Brimbank Australia Day Awards were announced at a special ceremony on Wednesday 18 January 2012.

The Friends of the HV McKay Memorial Gardens were presented with an **Environmental Achievement Award**, which recognises an individual or group that demonstrates passion for the environment and strives to improve it through conservation, preservation, protection, replenishment and education.

This award was presented to several Friends Groups across the LGA and it was noted that combined, the groups have spent the equivalent of more than 120 years of service working to improve the Brimbank environment.

Chair of Brimbank Administrators, Mr Peter Lewinsky congratulated all of the winners, along with the various nominees and those who received certificates of recognition on the night.

“It is very satisfying to be able to publicly recognise and thank those people who are making an outstanding contribution to our City,” Mr Lewinsky said.

“These awards are an opportunity for us as a community to celebrate those individuals and groups who, through their outstanding efforts, make the Brimbank community feel very proud. This year’s winners have demonstrated outstanding leadership and are role models for other community members and organisations.



Entering the gardens from the footbridge



Planting day - June 2011



Spring 2011



Spring 2011