



The Secretary
Select Committee on Public Land Development
Legislative Council
Parliament of Victoria
Spring St
MELBOURNE 3000

INQUIRY INTO THE SALE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LAND AND OPEN SPACE

My concern is **public parkland, presently owned by VicRoads, in an area of North Coburg bounded by Golf Rd, and the Edgars and Merri Creeks.** The land was purchased by VicRoads in the 1970's for a proposed F2 Freeway. That proposal has now been rejected. Government policy states that surplus land must be sold at market value and it has been offered first to Moreland Council. If Council cannot find the purchase price, the land will go to open sale. As some of the land is zoned residential, although flood prone, it will be a developer's dream and lost forever to the community. This public land is in jeopardy.

During the past thirty years Coburg, then Moreland Councils have spent many thousands of dollars developing and maintaining the land as green, open, public space. Hundreds of trees have been planted.

The area is well used by a huge number of people: walkers, dog owners (it is an off-leash area), athletes, golfers (it includes a golf practice area); people collect edible plants there. It provides social interaction through spontaneous meetings thus playing a part in strengthening our social fabric. It has become a haven for birds and wildlife.

The City of Moreland has little open, green parkland so this area is precious. Two large housing developments are adjacent to the park. Pentridge Village is already well developed with a mix of large houses that use all the block, and apartments. Former Kodak land is presently being remediated for development. Both rely heavily on already existing open parkland. Moreland is supporting the Government's Melbourne 2030 by encouraging higher population density in an appropriate way. Why, therefore, threaten public parkland? Where will children play – run, fly kites, kick balls? Is childhood obesity purely an academic issue?

The Victorian Government has seemed to be inflexible and intransigent in its handling of the future of this public land. Ministers and advisors simply reiterate that the policy is to sell surplus land. Why can't the Minister for Planning use his special powers to ensure that this public land remains in public hands? Why can't the land be gifted to the City of Moreland? Why does the Government seem to be in breach of its own guidelines? The publication: **" A Vision for Victoria to 2010 and Beyond. Growing Victoria Together,"** states a desire *'to ensure the city can continue to grow without destroying the "lungs" that help make it liveable.'* (P 12) Is this just spin in a glossy booklet?

It is unthinkable that this piece of public green space be sold for private development. Yet that remains a distinct possibility. Elsewhere, parkland that was provided by our city founders has been nibbled away and diminished. Here is an opportunity to retain vital, green, public parkland – yet it is under threat. It is both disappointing and worrying. It makes no sense to those of us who are concerned about the future of our communities and the value and importance of public land.

Thank you for the opportunity to put my point of view.

Anne A Sgro

14 - 9 - 2007.

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