



The Secretary
Legislative Council Select Committee on Public Land Development

SUBMISSION TO SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LAND DEVELOPMENT

Submission From:

Howard Tankey on behalf of the Mullum Mullum Festival Committee Inc

Background:

The **Mullum Mullum Festival** is a community-based environmental festival which has been in existence for 13 years. It mainly offers a variety of walks taken by recognised experts in their field to draw attention to the diverse range of natural and cultural features of the Mullum Mullum creek valley. The **Festival** also looks at the valley as a special place for carrying out activities such as astronomy, music, Indigenous craft, artistic interpretation, cycling, and even chess in a unique setting.

The main objectives of the Festival are:

1. To develop community awareness through education about and interaction with our environment, in particular with the ecologically rich Mullum Mullum creek valley
2. To promote and assist integration of the knowledge, spiritual understanding and values of the Wurundjeri people. In particular as this relates to their long involvement with the Mullum Mullum creek valley.
3. To encourage local 'ownership' of the Mullum Mullum creek valley area, thereby encouraging mutual sharing of responsibility with local authorities, thus accruing value which can lead to sustainability.

The need to understand and appreciate our natural environment and cultural heritage, both Indigenous and European, is obvious. Without these understandings our ability to create a sustainable society is compromised. The **Festival** consists of activities conducted by people with local knowledge and a passion for their interest or by people with a similar passion for the subject being investigated and with a knowledge of the broader relevance of the Mullum Mullum valley to the ecology of Melbourne. Sometimes these concepts impinge on even wider issues of national or global sustainability.

There have been 10 Festivals held 'annually'. The first was in 1995 following a cycle of 2 in spring and 2 in autumn with an 18 month gap between the Festivals involving a change to the different season. This allows people the see the same area under different conditions.

I have enclosed programs from the 1998 and 2006 Festivals to show the range of activities the Mullum Mullum Creek valley inspires.

How The Festival Informs This Submission:

The Festival demonstrates how our parks/open spaces can be used to help connect people with the natural environment and the historical relevance of our natural environment to our current situation. By doing this our lives can be enriched.

Areas such as the Mullum Mullum Creek valley, are unique in that they can be developed to form continuous, connected parks/open spaces. The importance and advantages of these natural spaces over the more conventional, isolated man-made parks has been recognised. These linear parks allow movement of flora and fauna and they more closely mimic true living ecosystems. On the other hand, parks isolated within built areas, have very limited flows in or out of new species. Linear parks also provide better recreational and exercise opportunities.

Missed Past Opportunities:

In 1959, the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme declared the Koonung and Mullum Mullum creek valleys as part of land reserved for future development of a main road. Now known as part of EastLink. Before this (since about 1929) the Koonung Valley had been classified as a park. Many of Melbourne's creeks were identified as ideal places for urban freeways.

The above ideas and facts cause us to reflect on how Melbourne's parks/open spaces could have been developed. If all the numerous creek valleys, which make up and feed into the Yarra Valley river system had been developed into an interconnecting system of public parks, all Melburnians would now have easy access to more natural environmental experiences.

Most of these most significant valleys have been buried under concrete roads for a form of transport, which is fast becoming unsustainable as a dominant mode.

Recommendation:

The **Mullum Mullum Festival** is informed by the idea that easy access to natural environments, which have minimal interference from humans, is important to the physical and psychological well being of both individuals and ultimately to communities and societies.

Decision-making on all future park developments should take the importance of the concept of interconnected parks/open spaces into account.

This should particularly apply to areas such as the Mullum Mullum Creek valley.



Howard Tankey
for the Mullum Mullum Festival Committee
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Mullum Mullum Festival Inc
PO Box 173
Mitcham 3132