**RHCA - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2015**

**Chairman’s Report**

RHCA has continued to play an important role in representing its members and the community in a range of issues and has been involved with key groups, the Red Hill Ward councillor Tim Wood, Mornington Peninsula Shire (MPS) officers, MPS council meetings, the Red Hill Ward Consultative Group, and Manton & Stony Creeks Landcare Group. Key issues for 2015 have included (in no particular order):

**Red Hill Community Park**

Great progress has been made over the past 12 months. With the permit in hand, the pine trees in the community park started coming down in January, 2015 – 78 in total and many of them were monsters. What a huge difference that made and then we had arranged for the Green Army team of Round 1 (via the Department of Environment and the Landcare Group) to remove the remainder of the woody weeds and clean up the site. Round 2 of the Green Army team came a few months later to do extensive planting of indigenous species, over 400 tubestock plants, and spread mulch. With a new permit in hand we arranged for the pine trees to be removed from the Callanan’s Rd carpark area to enable the Shire to develop a more useful space for more parking in 2016.

The draft Master Plan for the Red Hill Station Reserve, which includes the community park, Red Hill-Merricks trail head, and the railway platform and turntable areas, was approved unanimously by Council on April 13, 2015.

Under the Master Plan, the development of the playground equipment (“playspace”), information shelter, picnic shelter, picnic tables, barbecue and bench seats will all be installed and the target is by Christmas 2015. Contracts have already been issued for the works.

RHCA has worked with the Manton & Stony Creek Landcare Group which became the Project Sponsor for the Department of Environment and Primary Industry’s (DEPI) “Communities for Nature” scheme and a grant of $148,925 (excl. GST) was gained. The contract with DEPI (now DELWP) must be completed by March 2016.

The project is funded to a large extent by the grant and pretty well matched $ for $ by the Shire for this part of the Master Plan.

**War Memorial**

What a great event for the people of Red Hill and Main Ridge. The families and friends of all the service men and women and everyone else that wanted to commemorate the Centenary of Anzac on April 25 were able to gather at the new memorial. Over 250 people gathered and we followed the whole service protocol and included the Red Hill scouts, a recorder group from Red Hill School and dignitaries. So many thanks go to members of the committee and Dennis McIlroy and Geoff Taylor for their contributions. We made it by a whisker but we did it. Our next phase is to lay a slab surface and install some permanent seating. All work in progress.

Remembrance Day was mid-week but still well attended. The WW1 uniformed guard drilled excellently and we were honored to have the Shire’s CEO, Carl Cowie attend to lay a wreath with the others from RHCA, Red Hill Lions, Dennis and Jenny McIlroy and Hon Greg Hunt’s office.

**MP Localized Planning Statement**

This Statement is available at www.mornpen.vic.gov.au and it makes the Shire less subject to planning regulations suitable for metropolitan Melbourne under “Plan Melbourne” but inappropriate for the Shire and its GWZ.

The Statement has been established and the work of Allan Cowley, Strategic Planning Manager played a huge part in achieving the outcome. Submissions were made by RHCA and many others residents associations.

Our next phase is to create a Red Hill Planning Statement to fit under the MP Statement and to establish Design and Development Overlays for our residential and commercial precincts. RHCA is an initiator in the process.

**Red Hill Ward Consultative Group (RHWCG) and RAM**

This group provides a bi-monthly forum for a member or two of each community group within Red Hill Ward. The meetings enable participants to raise issues that are local and those that are of broader concern. Councillor Tim Wood introduced the RAM (Residents Association Meeting) bi-monthly meetings which enable each association to present any issues that are then taken on board by the Councillor and Shire officers for later comment prior to the next RAM meeting. RHCA participated in all the meetings.

The new system of RAM has formalized the meeting processes and reduced the more casual exchange of issues and ideas as established with the RHWCG initially.

**“Safer Place” and Fire Safety**

It is now quite clear that there is no nominated “Safer Place” for our area. The Shire has adopted the CFA and Emergency Services approach of “Get Out and Get Out Early”. Discussions with Damien Taylor, MPS Fire Protection Officer, have been aimed at introducing a community approach to our fire safety and push the Shire to implement the Shire’s Fire Management Plan and Roadside Safety Strategy plan. There has been a lot of planning but little work has been done by MPS. Tree overhangs on roads in our area have been surveyed and reported to MPS. RHCA’s Mark Stirling has been very active to ensure things are in place for this coming high risk period.

**RHCA Redefined**

The Statement of Purpose for Red Hill Community Association has been finalized since approval at the last AGM. Thanks to our secretary Kerry Watson for leading us through this process.

**Newsletters and Website:**

RHCA’s website at www.redhillcommunity association.com has been kept up-to-date by Felicity Jackson and it lets our members and the public know about our purpose, committee, our activities and issues, and to display our current and past Newsletters. Newsletters were done quarterly and distributed to members and the wider public. Articles have also been submitted to the Lions publication “Hill n Ridge”.

**Looking Forward**

The new RHCA is trying to concentrate on matters that will help the community in a positive way, the Community Park and memorial, a local community approach to bushfire, a local planning statement and a Design & Development Overlay are examples.

As part of our new RHCA, we are endeavoring to work even closer with the Shire, including the CEO Carl Cowie, Shire officers and Cr Tim Wood.

Committee members dedicate a lot of time to support the interests of the members and the community with their attendances at hearings, council meetings, community group meetings and communications with MPs, councillors and planners as well as reviewing newspaper articles, preparation of newsletters and updating our website. I would like to thank the committee for their excellent work and efforts in keeping RHCA active and focused and willing to adapt to the changing priorities of the community.

A great challenge for RHCA is to expand its membership and this is a key project for 2016.

Unfortunately Kerry Watson will be leaving the role of secretary come March 2016. She has done a great job for us and we thank her wholeheartedly for her contribution.

Mark Stirling has added new zest on many issues – thanks to him.

Our treasurer Jenny McIlroy has done a great job and Felicity Jackson and John Elderidge our other committee members have been ever-willing to do the things that are essential to help the running of the group.

On behalf the RHCA committee I wish to thank all the members for their ongoing support of RHCA and I encourage their involvement by joining the new committee and finding new members.

David Maddocks