

RHCA - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2017

Chairman's Report

Welcome to our Annual General Meeting for 2017. I'm pleased to see we have a good turnout and am thrilled that Lionel Lauch is with us as our Guest Speaker. I do apologise for the absence of Mark Stirling, our Chairperson, but he's on his way to Northern Territory where he'll be working in a community school for the next term.

At the outset of this meeting I think its useful to reflect on the purpose and relevance of our Community Association. Why? - because the concerns for inappropriate development that gave rise to RHCA's formation in 2005 are, possibly, more pressing and relevant today.

This past year has seen a coming together of a number of trends that could potentially have a very negative impact on our Red Hill environment and community. Growing population and commercial interests are increasing pressures for infrastructure and inappropriate development; rate capping and cost cutting by Mornington Peninsula Shire have reduced the availability of funding to protect and promote our area; the concerns of Red Hill Ward residents are under-represented on Council (with RH ward having just one of 11 Councillors); and, perhaps most alarming, the recent changes made by State Government introducing VicSmart and the undermining of localised planning statements which directly threaten the Green Wedge and the regulatory framework which preserves our rural character and way of life.

Against this backdrop its clear why we need an active and vibrant RHCA as its aim is to give voice to the Red Hill community's interest and concerns by advocating on behalf of the community; by providing a forum for community engagement; and by actively protecting and preserving the rural character and amenity of the Red Hill area. RHCA draws its strength and support from the Red Hill community of residents and enjoys strong linkages with a number of other community organisations including the Red Hill Lions (including "Hill and Ridge" newsletter), Peninsula Speaks, CFA, Red Hill Ward Consultative Group, Red Hill Show and local landcare groups. We have also enjoyed good and productive relations with our Councillor, David Gill, and State Government MLA Martin Dixon and his Office Manager Russell Joseph.

Progress

Over the past year RHCA has continued to advocate and act to protect and enhance our community. Its been a year of mixed results of which the following are worth highlighting.

1. Remembering our veterans. Memorial services were held on both ANZAC (25 April) and Remembrance (11 Nov) Days,. Both services were very well attended and

appreciated by Red Hill residents and veterans' families, with upwards of 200 attending each. The organising team behind this continues to be lead by Jenny and Dennis McIlroy and David Maddocks, who have done a terrific job. The memorial itself has also benefitted from further improvements this past year, with the fitting of seats, improved surfacing of the memorial area, and the updating of the memorial plaque to include the name of Walter Wright.

2. Community get together and BBQ. To encourage community interaction and cohesion the first of what we hope to be an annual BBQ and get-together was held on 28 January. About 250 community members attended. Kids enjoyed the recently completed playground, and all enjoyed a drink, BBQ and catch up with friends and RHCA members. This event was funded by the Community Event Triannual Funding Program, and masterfully managed by Kerry Watson with the support of RHCA committee members and team of volunteer "sausage sizzlers".

3. Red Hill Station Reserve. Its very pleasing to see our Red Hill Community Park evolve. Last year's plantings are thriving and returning this area to its natural beauty. The playground and BBQ facilities are being actively used; the Information Shelter has been completed with major input from RHCA on its design and content; and minor improvements have been made to expand car-parking space, though this and the toilet facilities remain inadequate.

In October 2016, the Tidy Towns awards for Victoria were presented and in the category of Sustainable Communities Awards 2016 the Red Hill Station Reserve Project won the "Protection of the Environment" award for the whole of the State – a fantastic achievement for our community.

Progress in advancing our work on phase 2 of the station reserve masterplan has, however, been stalled by a lack of funding. Submissions made by RHCA for MPS budget support (to the tune of \$110,000 in 2017-18) were not approved by Council which means that critical work in developing a detailed design, removal of remaining pine trees, revegetation of the area, and the interpretative reconstruction of the old station platform and turn-table could not be advanced. While RHCA will continue to seek MPS and other funding support too cover this major structural work, over the coming year we will work with local landcare groups to remove woody weeds (2-3 working bees planned before end 2017) and with local schools and artists to commission a mural to be created on the rear wall of Blue Moon. David Maddocks, John Eldridge and Tom Orr have been leading our work on this.

4. Traffic management. Responding to community concerns about increasing traffic congestion, RHCA submitted a proposal to MPS to undertake a traffic management study in 2017-18. This was successful, and our local government has allocated \$30,000 to undertake a road traffic management study to identify and prioritise investments to improve road infrastructure, safety, parking and traffic

management in the Red Hill area. Specifically, the study is expected to make recommendations to a) improve major roads servicing the Red Hill area; b) provide adequate parking capacity at Red Hill service station area, Red Hill Consolidated School and Red Hill South; c) establish dedicated bicycle lanes on key roads; and d) build community confidence that road infrastructure is capable of meeting fire emergency response and evacuation needs. This study is to be completed by March 2018 and will be undertaken by consultants contracted by Mornington Peninsula Shire. RHCA is expected to provide input to the design and implementation of the study, and help facilitate community dialogue around its findings and recommendations. We hope to have a community meeting to discuss the details of this study before the end of this year. David Maddocks and Mark Stirling have provided the lead on this activity.

5. Neighbourhood Watch. Earlier this year a number of community members expressed concern about increasing crime in the Red Hill area and raised the question as to whether we need to establish a Neighbourhood Watch. In response to these concerns RHCA consulted with Victoria Police and Somers Neighbourhood Watch on what's involved in setting up a NHW; invited community advice through a letterbox drop, Hill and Ridge article and RHCA's Facebook page; and convened a meeting at the CFA on 26 May to discuss whether we need a community crime prevention initiative in the Red Hill area. The turn-out at the community meeting was low (less than 20) and support for a community initiative at this time appeared luke warm - though there is strong community demand for more information on what crime is taking place and what can be done to prevent it. As a result of these consultations RHCA resolved that a stand-alone crime prevention initiative is not needed at present; that RHCA will consult with CFA to invite Victoria Police to provide a brief annual "crime update", perhaps as part of CFA's regular community meetings; and to revisit this approach if the crime situation or community interests change. Tom Orr lead our consultations with community, Police and others on this initiative.

6. Advocacy. During the course of the past year RHCA has advocated for more resources and attention to protecting and preserving the unique character of the Red Hill area. RHCA actively monitored the proposal to develop the Centrepoint facility, and David Maddocks has continued to actively chair the Red Hill Ward Consultative Group which is particularly focused on protecting the Green Wedge and ensuring that State Government Planning amendments (including VicSmart) don't enable inappropriate development. Within this approach RHCA has been urging MPS to undertake a Red Hill Character Study to help define overlays and regulations that would nurture and protect the rural character of Red Hill. This type of local planning regulation, however, is greatly threatened by the VicSmart reforms currently being pursued by the State Government.

7. Fundraising. Mobilising resources to fund RHCA's work has been a challenge over the past year. We continue to benefit from members contributions, have managed to mobilise some small grant support, and achieved limited success in

accessing Shire funding. For the coming year we need to develop a stronger fundraising strategy and draw up the initiatives of RHCA members. A great example of this was the Bunnings Sausage Sizzle planned and managed by John Eldridge, who got the entire committee involved and mobilise over \$1,800 - a terrific effort and contribution.

Looking forward

Looking to the future we have five main priorities.

Firstly, we need to remain vigilant to ensure that recent State Government reforms don't damage the character of Red Hill. We need to step up our efforts to define the Red Hill we want and ensure this is well reflected in planning statements and development overlays. To do so we need to move forward with the Red Hill Character Study; strongly advocate our concerns and priorities with our Council and local government; and lend our support (with other RHWCG members) to Mornington Peninsula Shire and Council to protect the unique character of Red Hill and the Peninsula and guard against planning statements that regard us as an extension of Melbourne.

Secondly, we need to move forward with implementation of stage two of the Red Hill Station Reserve, even though resources are few and uncertain. What we can do is arrange working bee's, mobilise local resources and small grants from MPS to remove woody weeds, plant indigenous shrubs, and install a mural at the back of Blue Moon. At the same time we need to continue and expand our efforts to raise the larger funds required to remove the old pine trees and undertake the interpretative reconstruction of the railway platform, turntable and buffer stop.

Thirdly, we need to actively support the design and implementation of the Red Hill Traffic Management Study and particularly to ensure that community concerns and opinions are fully considered in its design, recommendations and subsequent implementation.

Fourthly, we need to explore how RHCA could contribute to the final design and implementation of the Red Hill (Sporting) Reserve Masterplan to ensure it enhances the character and amenity of the Red Hill we collectively want.

And fifthly, we need to continue to act as a forum to represent community interests and facilitate community interaction and linkages. In addition to our arranging of war memorial services and annual BBQ's and get-togethers we need to strengthen our partnerships and listen to and respond to issues of community interest.

In keeping RHCA running our Committee has worked hard. Kerry Watson has been a very active and productive Vice Chair and has handled our public information, newsletter and website. David Maddocks has managed our books as Treasurer and

maintained the very high standards set by Jenny McIlroy. John Eldridge has taken on the role of Secretary, which he shares with Carolyn Massola, and they are both doing a terrific job; and Tom Orr, Melissa Goffin and myself lend a hand as and when needed. Its a good team, it works hard and well, and I am very proud to be a part of it.

We are sorry that two committee members (Lee Burton and Rob Bakker) resigned this past year due to health concerns. We wish them both well and look forward to their rejoining the Committee when circumstances permit.

And to our members (all 55 of them), 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.

Thank you.