

PEEL PRESERVATION GROUP INC. – ANNUAL REPORT 2013

In some ways 2013 has been a sad year in that we have lost long-timelife member and ‘Environmental Warrior’ Vic Beacham but his memory lives in many, many ways – not the least being the recent naming of the Victor Beacham Reserve in his honour. His energy and devotion to the environmental cause was both legendary and inspirational. He will never be forgotten.

Very early in the year we signed the new lease for our office at 63 Ormsby Terrace and are very grateful to the City of Mandurah for granting us a rental amnesty, without which we would have had great difficulty making ends meet financially. There was also difficulty in finding an affordable Public Risk insurance policy, so the City of Mandurah offered to waive that requirement, so if you visit our office, please watch your step – no tripping up. The lack of Public Risk insurance also restricts our ability to participate independently in outside displays or projects in public spaces.

On the other hand, we have had some high points to balance our year. After considerable research and preparation of application and an unusual waiting period because of internal changes within Lotterywest we received a generous cheque and purchase an Aquaread Multi Function Water Test meter. It is amazingly accurate and easy to use, doing away with the need to manually test with reagents and colour charts, which can be far less accurate. The meter has already attracted the interest of other groups and it has been hired out on several occasions. I guess we are a bit like nervous parents and have sent our operator along with the meter. We have applied for funding to expand our testing regime but, although we have had no news, we suspect the cuts to environmental funding for community groups will prevent any further funding. Unfortunately, government departments have also had their funding cut and monitoring programs will suffer. Hopefully we can maintain or even expand our program of water testing.

We have been surprised to discover the Not-for-profit groups such as ours are now required to have a Charitable Collections Licence to enable us to accept any donations, even unsolicited ones. There was no fee involved but a list of requirements to fulfil. I am pleased to report that our Licence arrived in October.

City of Mandurah has again supported us in producing our newsletter, The Preservation Times with a grant from their Community Association Fund which covers about half the printing and postage costs. We find many members still like the hardcopy (easier to read whilst lolling on the lounge) but you can have a digital copy if you prefer. If you are not a member and have not been receiving our informative magazine, that can be remedied. However there are spare copies available today.

Strategic Planning for the Perth Peel Region had been in limbo but revisited this year with several members attending discussion sessions. Most of those who attended did not feel optimistic to the acceptance of their input. The proposed system will alter the way land is allocated for development and how public consultation/submission takes place.

Over the last year or so we have lost some of our committee members but reviewing the constitution shows we can have ‘up to’ 12 committee members but can legally operate with less. We do hope to keep near the full compliment as the input and ideas of a larger committee ensures a broader view of environmental issues. With this in mind, we invite interested people to volunteer to become a PPG committee member – you will be most welcome. Much of our contact and submission preparation is via email, with the regular Coffee Mornings prior to the meetings (usually Saturday) and monthly committee meeting so not an onerous task.

A group of members met recently to formulate a Strategic Plan for PPG. This was a new experience for some folk but serves to formally record what we do and why. The committee has approved the document and copies of the Plan have been printed and distributed so the wider membership can have a vote to determine the acceptance (hopefully) of the Plan.

Two of our members did an extensive survey of water fountains in the city area and discovered that several are broken, unusable or missing but we do appreciate the City's new version and hope to see more of them. Once there is a good distribution of working drink fountains perhaps we will see less plastic 'disposable' water bottles littering land or sea, wasting resources or going to landfill.

We sponsored Lakelands Landlink in successfully applying to City of Mandurah for funds to enable them to hold a Nightstalk recently. Members attend these meetings for support whilst the membership of locals increases.

Writing submissions on various environmental issues and development proposals continues to form a large part of PPG activity. Some of them include –

Concerning rezoning of Suttons Farm

Alcoa "pond" extension (which was later approved with certain conditions)

WAPC re Madora North which was later approved with minimal consideration of the bulk of submissions

WAPC – Nth Dandalup Townsite (approved Oct 13)

Support of CoM for Geothermal heating of aquatic centre (which was successful)

Submission on Mariners Cove proposal to develop the old Sales Office site

Endorsement of FRAGYLE submission opposing limestone quarry at Lake Pollard

Submission re Leisure Way development proposal

Letter protesting the cut of funds for the environment

Aquatic use review including boat speed, erosion and danger to dolphins and canoeists

Peel Preservation Group members continue to volunteer with other groups in planting trees/shrubs, being part of 'Friends' groups and joining in Clean Up Australia Day, to name a few.