



## **REPA NEWSLETTER**



### **RURAL ENVIRONMENT PLANNING ASSOCIATION INC.**

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May 2009

#### **Annual General Meeting**

REPA's 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday, 31 March 2009 at the Brookfield Hall. Last year's committee was returned without any changes, but since then, our Secretary, Mandy Fisher, has found that she cannot continue in the position. The Committee is most appreciative of all the work that Mandy has done for REPA in recent years. Trish Whellum, who joined the Committee last year, has agreed to take Mandy's place. We are all most grateful to her.

At the AGM, we had a most interesting talk on the "Effects of roads on wildlife and approaches to mitigation – implications for urban conservation" by Cathryn Dexter, a researcher with Griffith University's Centre For Innovative Conservation Strategy, Applied Road Ecology Group. Cathryn's talk, which was highly relevant to our concerns over Gap Creek Road, brought to light some of the major issues associated with roads and how they affect faunal movement and threaten wildlife populations. She showed how these issues are being tackled in Australia and abroad (we had a wonderful picture of reindeer using a bridge to cross a major highway in Canada). Cathryn went on to discuss how successful the special culverts and the land bridge have been at Compton Road (adjacent to Karawatha Forest in Brisbane). She also described plans for fauna friendly culverts in Redlands. In the course of her talk, Cathryn extended an invitation to come and view the Compton Road structures and to inspect various culverts in Redlands. The Committee welcomed this suggestion, as it will provide a most interesting opportunity for REPA's annual walk and have arranged with Cathryn to meet on Sunday, 14 June.

#### **REPA's Annual Walk – Compton Road and Redlands culverts – Sunday, 14 June 2009**

This year, 2009, REPA's annual walk will comprise a visit to view the fauna friendly culvert crossings under Compton Road and the land bridge over it. We also hope to be able to visit some of the recently designed culverts in Redlands. A visit to Karawatha Forest is an additional possibility.

The details, times, transport and meeting place, for this expedition have not yet been finalised, but if you are interested, please contact Jenny Hacker (phone 3374 1468, email [jbhacker@powerup.com.au](mailto:jbhacker@powerup.com.au)). We envisage travel will be by car, preferably sharing as much as possible.

#### **Proposed Upgrade of Gap Creek Road**

It is proposed that the upgrade of Gap Creek Road will occur in two stages: the first, to begin this year, is to include sealing the dirt sections and realigning the Kookaburra Street intersection. The second stage is scheduled for next year and is to include improvements to the remaining sections of the road. The aim is to constrain traffic speeds along the whole road to a maximum of 50 km/hr.

At the end of March, the Senior Project Manager, the Project Ecologist and the Project Facilitator met community representatives and Cr Margaret de Wit at the Gap Creek Reserve to discuss the status of the Project and to walk along the dirt section of Gap Creek Road in order to consider the probable impacts. REPA committee members Rachel Griffiths and Jenny and Bryan Hacker attended, together with representatives from Moggill Creek Catchment Group and the Australian Koala Foundation. Rachel also represented THECA (The Hut Environmental and Community Association). The Senior Project Manager was also the Manager for the Compton Street project which involved the construction of the land bridge and the fauna friendly culverts.

We were shown plans of the proposed traffic calming devices to be installed along the current dirt sections of Gap Creek Road. These include speed bumps and traffic slowing half circles. It is planned that the devices will be about 100 m apart and that the speed bumps will alternate with the half circles.

There was considerable discussion about the decision to replace the one-lane bridge with a two-lane bridge. All the community representatives felt that the one-lane bridge would provide an excellent traffic-calming device, as is frequently used in Europe. The Council representatives were adamant, however, that a one lane bridge is not acceptable according to Australian Standards for a road carrying the amount of traffic that uses Gap Creek Road.

The Kookaburra Street intersection with Gap Creek Road was also discussed. REPA has always been concerned that this is a very difficult and dangerous intersection. Council has not yet come to a decision as to how it should be resolved. REPA is also most concerned regarding the future of the mature eucalypts and a fig tree close to this intersection. As well as providing significant habitat and food for our wildlife they are also important for the scenic amenity of Gap Creek Road.

REPA hopes to have further information about this project available at our exhibit at the forthcoming Brookfield Show.

### **Brookfield Show – 15 – 17 May 2009**

REPA will be having a display tent at the Brookfield Show this year. It will be in approximately the same position as last year – near the Hall on the lower level. We hope that members will take the opportunity to visit the tent and discuss matters affecting the district.

### **City Plan 2000 Review**

Brisbane City Council has prepared a document entitled “*How the Brisbane City Plan could change: options for a sustainable future. A formal Statement of Proposals for the City Plan 2000 review*”. Submissions are due by 22 May 2009. The three core elements of the City Plan are:

- the Strategic Plan
- The rules
- Local and Neighbourhood Plans

A core focus of the current review is to update the Strategic Plan and, with a view to this, the proposals include eight Vision themes for the city.

- Regional and world city
- Smart, prosperous city
- Well-designed, subtropical city
- Clean and green city
- Accessible, connected city
- Active and healthy city
- Vibrant creative city
- Friendly, safe city

One of the new directions under the ‘Clean and green’ theme is that “*Council will investigate offering ‘biodiversity offsets’.* *Biodiversity offsets would allow developers and residents to clear some land if they plant vegetation elsewhere in the city at a higher ratio, ensuring ‘no net ecological impact’.*” It is unclear what the ‘higher ratio’ implies. REPA considers that retaining existing vegetation is critically important for maintaining biodiversity. The importance of mature trees is well known and furthermore planting schemes are most unlikely to be able to reproduce the complexity of habitats that occur naturally. This coupled with the challenges of maintaining and nurturing young plantings renders such a ‘biodiversity offset’ scheme as being most unlikely to realise appropriate ecological benefits.

REPA will be making a submission on the City Plan Review.

### **Proposed development between Witty Road, Church Road and Matfield Street, Moggill**

This development on 19.7 hectares for 87 lots in five stages was approved at the end of October last year, subject to numerous conditions. The applicant has accepted the approval after having negotiated with Council regarding the conditions, allowing a reduction in the infrastructure charges. REPA has not appealed against the approval.

### **Membership**

Thank you to all those members who have renewed for 2009. Please note that \$20 covers one membership. If there are two names on the renewal sheet (but only \$20 paid), we have assumed that the first-named is the member. Also, apologies to those who received a reminder stating (wrongly) that their membership for 2008 was overdue. This was a typo on our part.

Thank you also to all those who included donations with their membership renewal. Your support is much appreciated.

A further reminder form is enclosed (or attached) for those members who have not yet renewed for 2009.

We look forward to seeing you at the Brookfield Show.

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