



## REPA NEWSLETTER



### RURAL ENVIRONMENT PLANNING ASSOCIATION INC.

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August 2009

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

Environmental issues associated with the proposed upgrade of Gap Creek Road continue to be of concern. REPA committee members Rachel Griffiths and Jenny and Bryan Hacker have attended several meetings with City Council staff to consider these issues. As mentioned previously, it is proposed that the upgrade of Gap Creek Road will occur in two stages: the first, scheduled to begin in October 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.

The community representatives are delighted with the decision to impose a speed limit of 50 kph along the whole road, from Brookfield Road to Payne Road, and to install speed platforms and other traffic calming devices on the section through Mt Coot-tha Forest Park (as designed, the speed platforms should slow traffic to 20 km/hr). The Council claims that according to Australian Standards, lighting is required at all traffic calming devices. We have serious reservations about the need for this lighting, as we consider reflectors to be effective, as used in Greentrees Avenue. We are seeking independent expert opinion on this issue and Council have agreed to consider this. We have noted that the speed humps on Greentrees Avenue, which has the same road classification as Gap Creek Road, does not have lighting on the speed humps, although there is some other lighting along much of the street.

We are particularly concerned about the proposed reconfiguration of the Kookaburra Street/Gap Creek Road intersection. The current road alignment is unsafe, the land is very steep, and there is a large number of significant trees close to the road. Council proposes to remove more than 70 trees in this area, and we have told Council that this is unacceptable, on both environmental and visual amenity grounds. It is recognised that Council has an extremely difficult problem here, which requires an out-of-the-ordinary solution. A large yellow sign has been attached to the fig tree by the intersection, which says "Save this tree – Tie a yellow ribbon". It is not known who attached the sign; it will be interesting to see what response it receives.

The design of Stage 2, through the residential areas at the north and south ends of the road (excluding the Kookaburra Street intersection, which is in Stage 1), is still to be finalised. We have delivered a survey to all residents on the road, asking views on wildlife safety and traffic calming devices; 54% of residents responded, and all of them wanted speed platforms and other devices installed (with some reservations about lighting). We have submitted a summary of these responses to Council and are hopeful that these will be taken into account in the design for Stage 2. Council has indicated recently that they are not now planning to include these devices for Stage 2, having advised previously that they would be included.

Rachel, Bryan and Jenny, together with the assistance of some Gap Creek Road residents, are also contributing to the environmental monitoring being conducted by Griffith University, by regular (4 times weekly) roadkill surveys. This will help to identify any wildlife hotspots, and also enable comparison of the before and after construction situation.

For more information on the upgrade, you can contact the project team on [Donna.Marshall@marcomcommunication.com.au](mailto:Donna.Marshall@marcomcommunication.com.au) or phone 1800 199 757. If you would like to discuss any of the issues with Jenny, Bryan or Rachel, our contact details are below.

#### **REPA's Annual Walk – Compton Road and Redlands culverts**

About 15 REPA members accepted Cathryn Dexter's invitation to view the land bridge over Compton Road, the fauna friendly culvert under it and other structures as well as another culvert under Boundary Road in Redlands Shire. Cathryn (from Griffith University's Centre for Innovative Conservation Strategy, Applied Road Ecology Group) had previously given a very interesting talk at our AGM this year about these structures and other improvements that can be made to make roads more wildlife friendly.

The Compton Road structures were most impressive, particularly the land bridge. The trees on the land bridge have grown up well, some are now several metres tall. There are also rope bridges for possums and other arboreal mammals and glider poles on the land bridge, all of which assist mammals to cross the road. Small birds, who would otherwise be intimidated by the width of the four lane Compton Road, are also able to make use of the cover on the land bridge.

Cathryn told us how very successful this project has been. In the 24 months following construction of the crossing structures and installation of the wildlife exclusion fencing only five road-killed animals were observed; whereas before the construction, road-kills were a common sight.

Before visiting Compton Road, we also visited a culvert under Boundary Road in Redlands Shire, which had not been as carefully planned as the structures at Compton Road and was not so effective. Cathryn explained to us the importance of site specific design.

It was a most interesting, enjoyable and worthwhile visit, which concluded with lunch in the adjacent Karawatha Forest Park. We were particularly pleased to realise how effective the structures are in reducing road-kills along Compton Road

### **Mt Coot-tha Visioning Group**

The Brisbane City Council aims to develop a Master Plan for the Mt Coot-tha area, which totals more than 1600 hectares, over the next two years. The area includes not only Mt Coot-tha Forest Park, with all its trails, the TV Stations, the Summit Lookout and restaurant, but also the quarry and the Botanic Gardens complex, with the Queensland Herbarium, a branch of the BCC Library, the auditorium and the Lakeside Café. BCC wishes to develop a long-term plan and to examine key changes needed to accommodate the growing aspirations and needs of both residents of Brisbane and visitors to Southeast Queensland.

Jenny Hacker is one of 16 members of the Mt Coot-tha Visioning Group which has been convened by the City Council to provide input into the development of the vision to guide future planning and investment in the Mt Coot-tha precinct. The members include environmentalists, bushwalkers, mountain bike riders, sociologists, landscape architects and people who have family connections to the area. So far, we have met twice and had one excursion – round the Botanic gardens, the quarry and up the mountain.

Various suggestions have been aired and transport has been a major concern; tourist potential seems to be high on the agenda. One of the meetings incorporated a presentation on the Eden project in Cornwall, England, where an old China clay pit has been converted into a showcase of the major vegetation communities in the world. There have been suggestions for a future use of the quarry when its available supply of hardrock has been exhausted in about 12 -16 years time.

We need to ensure that Mt Coot-tha's biodiversity is not sacrificed for short-term financial gain. It is early days in the Visioning process and it is to be hoped that discussions will lead to positive outcomes – particularly positive environmental outcomes.

### **Rafting Ground Road culvert**

REPA is concerned that work has not yet started on the Rafting Ground Road culvert upgrade. It was understood that work was expected to have begun in July so as to avoid construction delays caused by wet weather and possible flooding.

### **Pet Chalet, Brookfield**

Council has approved the Pet Chalet's application for extensions, subject to conditions. These conditions include limits to the number of dogs (128) and cats (98) boarded overnight at the facility, implementation of the approved Environmental Management Plan, time limits on heavy vehicle movements and the maintenance of a complaints register. REPA did make a submission regarding this application as local residents were concerned about noise, whilst recognising that the Pet Chalet provides a valuable local service. REPA will not be appealing against Council's decision

### **Country Market, Uniting Church, Brookfield, Saturday 12 September, 8 am – 1 pm**

The Uniting Church at Brookfield will be holding its popular annual Country Market on Saturday 12 September between 8 am and 1 pm. The Moggill Creek Catchment Group will be selling plants and are sharing their site with REPA. Trish Whellum plans to be there between 10 am and 12 noon and will have some information on the Gap Creek Road and Rafting Ground Road culvert upgrades.

### **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.

Thank you also to 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.

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