East Melbourne Group
**Annual Report to Members – 2019**

On behalf of the EMG Committee and Sub Committees, I present our annual report to members.

As I walk through our beautiful suburb with its heritage buildings, wonderful streetscapes and parks and gardens, I think how lucky we are. But it is more than just luck. Over 60 years the East Melbourne Group has worked hard to maintain these assets and to build the community spirit that encourages and appreciates these.

I want to acknowledge and thank committee members for their untiring volunteer work throughout the year. They have families, friends, and jobs to perform, yet they give their time to help make East Melbourne the wonderful suburb it is.

Tom Hogg is stepping down after five years on the committee including four as Treasurer. We thank him very much for his considerable assistance.

Marcel Mihulka, who has moved across Spring St is also leaving the committee. We thank him for his service particularly in accessing grants.

Our Administrator Carolyn Fyfe continues with valuable assistance to Members, potential members and Committee. She is available Tuesday and Friday afternoons at the Hut.

Vice President Murray Hohnen and Secretary Stuart Hamilton continue to provide me and the committee enormous management support. They have helped us keep in touch with you our most valuable members via the Website and Monthly email updates.

EMG also hosted a Lord Mayor Candidates Forum, where members could ask Lord Mayor candidates their views on issues. By all accounts this was well received.

Regarding aircraft noise, EMG worked with and are grateful to our federal member Adam Bandt MP and Senator Janet Rice for developing the Aircraft Amendment Bill 2018. We presented to the Senate Inquiry which ultimately did not support the Bill, claiming the issues could be dealt with by making the current system work better. We hope the effort expended and the issues raised will make this so.

EMG objected to a Melbourne Football Club proposal for a practice oval in Yarra Park, and a multi-story headquarters over the Jolimont train lines next to Wellington Parade. Prior to the State elections, we sought views of political aspirants to such a proposal. We were assured by the Labour Party that such a proposal would not be permitted. The Premier reiterated this promise after being returned to government.

This was a significant win for EMG and common sense. Special thanks to Bill Gillies, Stuart Hamilton, Murray Hohnen and Greg Bisinella, and to those members who made generous donations. These enabled us to employ professional assistance to get our message to politicians at the time of the state election.

***Heritage and Planning (Greg Bisinella)***

In addition to the people who make up our community are the houses and buildings that provide a visual representation of our history. These continue to tell an important story and create a sense of place and community. Heritage buildings bring joy to those who live in or visit East Melbourne and are important to our wellbeing. Juxtapose the sense of life and wonder one experiences walking through East Melbourne, to the isolation and anxiety the high-rise buildings of the CBD evoke.

Unfortunately, some want to exploit the area and its buildings for personal financial gain. There is little consideration for what is historically significant and what it means to those of us who chose to live here. Developers continue to see East Melbourne as a lucrative area and spend significant sums of money on QC’s and Heritage and Planning “Experts” to fight their cases at VCAT. What purports to impact on heritage, amenity and streetscapes is imprecisely defined and creates a dispute requiring legal adjudication. Without legal representation success is unlikely. As a community we must be able to “fight fire with fire.” We need to coordinate our financial and human resources to ensure our unique and treasured neighbourhood is maintained.

Susan Henderson, Ian Mitchell and Greg Bisinella spent four days at VCAT, representing the residents of East Melbourne over the application to “over develop” the site at 99 Grey St. Whilst the decision was to approve the application we did manage to achieve some concessions in set back and height. We estimate the Applicant spent more than $50,000 on Legal representation, a QC, 2 heritage experts and a planner.

On another positive note the proposed multi-storey commercial development at 204-208 Albert St has been met with a well-coordinated group of objectors supported by the East Melbourne Group. The team lead by Adam Stevens and Brad Marsh have shown what can be achieved with a well organised group of residents objecting to an inappropriate development. With over 100 objections the application appears headed for a significant revision.

Thanks also to the EMHS and particularly Barbara Patterson, Jill Fenwick and Sylvia Black for their advice on several heritage-related matters, and collaboration on the Melbourne Football Club proposal.

***Amenities (Susan Henderson)***

**Aircraft Issues –** We continue to work towards better management of unregulated light aircraft and helicopters over inner Melbourne and the increase in low flying passenger jets.

* We held a rally on the steps of parliament to protest about the risks from accidental or deliberate crashes, excessive noise and vibration. Despite a cold and rainy day, we still had over 80 people attend, an indication of the concern in the community.
* EMG attended the Future Melbourne Committee meeting to highlight the problem. As a result, Lord Mayor Sally Capp and all councillors advised that the City of Melbourne will be an advocate in this matter.
City of Melbourne is currently preparing a “call to parties” that will include the question:
‘Will you review and replace regulations and directives to CASA to ensure that non-emergency flight amenity impacts over built up areas can be effectively monitored, managed and minimised?’ This is a first for any City Council and a huge achievement for our group.

**Parking for new developments –** Our work with council has meant that new developments can no longer get special street parking permits and existing 3A permits are forfeited if the number of dwellings on a block is increased.

**Streamlining Hoddle St –** We have had an extra ‘NO Left Turn’ installed leading to Hotham St on Hoddle St and are working toward getting a flashing sign operating during the peak times.

**Illegal turns from Wellington Pde to Simpson St –** We are awaiting funding from council for an extension of the island wedge (with suitable planting) on Wellington Pde at the intersection with Simpson St

**Parking sensors –** Parking sensors have now been installed in Jolimont and around the block of Victoria Pde, Simpson St, Albert St and Clarendon St.

**Speeding –** We continue to lobby council and VicRoads for a 40kph speed limit throughout East Melbourne.

**Rubbish in railway reserve –** We are working to keep this eyesore free of rubbish and weeds with both MCC and Vic Roads. The area has recently received a major clean-up.

**Resident access to Jolimont during MCC events –** We met with Council and MCC to resolve the periodic issues of limited access for Jolimont residents to their homes during major events. The contractor City Wide will be given clearer instructions to allow access to residents.

**TPG infrastructure for 5G –** We liaised with TPG to relocate their 5G infrastructure away from sensitive areas such as the Powlett St and Berry St child care centres. This new network is currently on hold.

**Footpath “Visual Aid” tiles** – We are working with council’s Infrastructure Design Team to improve the white ‘Visual Aid’ tiles on our street corners to avoid residents slipping when tiles are wet.

**Netball ring –** We are liaising with council to have a netball ring added to the other end of the concrete pad of the existing basketball ring in Powlett Reserve.

**Graffiti –** We continue to work with council to have Graffiti quickly removed from walls and fences in East Melbourne. Please report any graffiti to council using: The SNAP, SEND, SOLVE App. or the council website <https://services.melbourne.vic.gov.au> .

***Parks and Gardens (Murray Hohnen)***

The Parks and Gardens sub-committee continues to monitor the parks and gardens with which East Melbourne is blessed. Overall the standards are high, and the park management has been generally responsive to suggestions from sub-committee members. The notable exception has been the railway land beside Wellington Parade which remains sadly neglected.

The dog walking community continues to respond favourably to the gazetted off leash area in Yarra Park though there are concerns that an informal equivalent is emerging at the north end of Fitzroy Gardens.

The major adverse issues continue to be the use of the heritage listed Yarra Park as a car park supporting events at the MCG, Melbourne and Olympic Parks and increasing use of the park for ”events” for which it is unsuited.

EMG Secretary, Stuart Hamilton, continues as community representative on the Yarra Park Advisory Committee and sub-committee member David Wark community representative on the Council’s Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee.

***Social (Anita Steinbarth)***

We had two very enjoyable Social events in the year. The first was a memorable Trivia night at the Unitarian Church in August, with Bill Gillies as quizmaster. Second was a terrific Christmas Party at Genevieve and Gary Morgan’s for which we are most grateful. Anita assisted with both events and has since stepped up as Social Convenor.

***Communications (Darin Schade)***

For several reasons no magazine was released last year; however, a new subcommittee is being formed to release a new issue shortly. A new social media presence has been created, providing the Group with new channels to communicate with the community. The Group now has a presence on:

- Twitter

- Instagram and

- Facebook

***Membership (Stuart Hamilton***

The newly introduced three-year subscription has been well subscribed and will be available again this year.

Our membership has increased by 40 to 503 members. As the numbers we represent gives us more sway with decision makers and more financial capability, we are constantly working to increase member numbers. We ask you to encourage your friends and neighbours to join the EMG.

***Sub Committee Opportunities***

We are seeking subcommittee contributors for Heritage and Planning, Social, Membership and Communications. If you or someone you know would like to assist and be involved, please speak to me or Committee member. We have a lot of fun and make a difference to East Melbourne.

***Finance***

Our Treasurer Greg Watson, who has been a great help during the year, will present the financial statements as the next item of business, but in summary:

The 2018 year resulted in the Group achieving a surplus of $12,647 against a budgeted loss of $1,682.

Subscriptions eventually came in just above budget due to people joining as a result of the Election BBQ and the letterbox drop regarding Yarra Park.

We had 2 fundraising events plus the Election BBQ instead of the budgeted 3 but they have all been great successes and we were only under budget by $1,700.

Excluding the magazine income budgeted for we are pretty much in line with our budgeted income for the year.

The employment expenses for the year were $13,320 against a budgeted figure of $18,360 as Carolyn only works the hours needed rather than fixed hours.

Planning and Heritage expenses have been budgeted straight line across the year, but only minimal costs have been incurred this year, so we are showing a surplus of $7,911.

Overall for the year we have an operating surplus of $12647 compared to a budgeted loss for the year of $1854. The surplus has been transferred into cash reserves and means that the amount available to fund campaigns against a major objectionable development is now all the greater.

At the end of the year we had cash reserves of $92,914 of which $9,878 were subscriptions paid in advance.

Based on our strong financial position the Committee is recommending that subscriptions remain the same for the 2019 year.

Thank you

Ian Mitchell
President

18th March 2019