

East Melbourne Group
2018 Annual Report to Members

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

I 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.

After 10 years of tireless effort on Committee and as Heritage and Planning Convenor, Barbara Paterson is stepping down. Barbara has brought her legal and planning skills to so many issues over the years. She has prepared Zoning and Planning submissions to Council and Government. She has guided and initiated objections to inappropriate developments which have sometimes involved Council and VCAT appearances. We thank her for her enduring contribution.

Our Treasurer Tom Hogg has ably managed our finances for four years. While stepping down as Treasurer, Tom will continue on the Committee and we thank him for his considerable service. Greg Watson has agreed to be our new treasurer.

John Stone with assistance produced an excellent magazine and wonderful Winter Gala Dinner at the Victorian Artist Society. Unfortunately, John has left East Melbourne.

Adrian Trioli and Theo Buskes are leaving and we thank them for their contribution.

Our Administrator, Carmel Burke, left us after many years of service. We thank her for years of assisting the Committee and members. We have Carolyn Fyfe working for EMG Tuesday and Friday afternoons at the Hut.

Vice President Murray Hohnen and Secretary Stuart Hamilton have provided me and the committee with enormous management support and helped us keep in touch with members via the Website and Monthly email updates.

Heritage and Planning

Some of the issues we have been working on this year include -

Valetta – Trespassers have entered Valetta on several occasions this year. Heritage Victoria has been notified on each occasion and has instigated some action by the owner to secure the property.

The owner agreed to put in doors and window which were to be prepared by a heritage expert by mid-February. It appears that something is happening at Valetta along these lines now.

Peter Mac site - A coalition of interested parties called the Eastern Hill Coalition has been formed to promote our views re opposing the rezoning of the site i.e. keeping the site in public use and declaring Eastern Hill a historic precinct. The Coalition has had some publicity on Radio Melbourne and in The Age and we have emailed various politicians. There has been no word from the State Government concerning any plans for the site to date. We are indebted to Liz Rushen (EMHS) for her work on this project.

Local planning policies - Melbourne Council is in the process of revamping its local planning policies. EMG has worked with EMHS on the Heritage Places Inventory. This is a largely bureaucratic process at this stage but we have been able to identify several omissions and inaccuracies. We have taken the opportunity to urge Council to undertake a heritage review of East Melbourne as a matter of priority.

Excavation – Residents have been rightly concerned over the last few years over the increase in large-scale excavations with potential to damage the water table resulting in damage to neighbouring properties. The latest example is 61-3 Grey St where the owners propose to excavate extensively across the site for a 4-car basement garage. Various neighbours have contacted us regarding the issue and we have expressed our concerns to Council as have about 6 other objectors.

99-105 Grey St – Of interest are plans for this site which on the south-east corner of Grey and Powlett St, a prominent East Melbourne corner. The developer seeks a permit to demolish the current, undistinguished building on the site and to construct a new residence consisting of a basement for 3 cars, 2 storeys of residence and a rooftop terrace with a pool.

Social and Fund Raising

As well as the Winter Gala Dinner, we had two major social events. Genevieve and Gary Morgan with help from Anita Steinbarth organised a wonderful Christmas Function at the historic Old Treasury Building. Also, Genevieve and Gary helped by Anita, kindly organised and made available their lovely home for a terrific Summer Garden Party in February 2018. We thank them most sincerely for making these events happen, and so successful and enjoyable.

Amenities

Greg Bisinella and his subcommittee again worked tirelessly to ensure the amenity of East Melbourne continues to meet the needs of members and residents. In addition to monthly meetings they spent many hours meeting with local political representatives and council members to promote our concerns.

These institutions see the EMG as the voice and representative of the East Melbourne community, often contacting us about issues affecting the community. It has been our ongoing position to support initiatives that are undertaken after consultation with residents directly impacted.

Aircraft noise - Air services amendment bill is being reintroduced to the house at the end of March. Members can show support through the website <https://greens.org.au/aircraftnoise>

Parking - Residents of Jolimont and a section of East Melbourne around Powlett reserve area were surveyed by council about the installation of in ground parking sensors. Support for the installation was strong in Jolimont and mixed in the Powlett area with the outcome that sensors will be introduced in Jolimont and in a small section of the North-East Precinct of East Melbourne

Permits - We supported the implementation of a modification to the East Melbourne Parking Scheme which prevents the eligibility to Area 3a resident parking permits for any development which increases residential density.

We have supported the installation of an additional "No Left Turn" sign on Hoddle St, on the approach to Hotham St, as the sign here can be visually obscured for some motorists.

Council has written to VicRoads requesting their consideration to fund and install electronic LED "No Left Turn" signs at George, Hotham and Gipps Streets. The LED signs would only flash during the banned peak periods and would likely increase conformance.

We indicated our support for a 40km zone in East Melbourne .

Eastbourne development noise - We worked with council and the developer to minimise inconvenience to residents, especially those in Clarendon St who have had to endure early morning trucks idling outside their windows.

Share bike scheme - we continued to work with Council to ensure the provider manages the bikes in a manner that does not overtly impact the East Melbourne amenity.

Graffiti - we maintain a vigilant reporting of graffiti and have seen improvements in the response time to clean up this scourge.

The rail corridor graffiti has been painted over and the time between re offending has increased. We encourage all members to report any graffiti directly to council using the <http://www.snapsendsolve.com> app or the council website. <https://services.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Report/Graffiti>

Darling square event booking - A recent council approved event in Darling square has raised concerns from members and residents. We are concerned about the appropriateness of this venue for large organised, evening events that include alcohol and amplified music. The matter has been raised with council for consultation.

Parks and Gardens

Murray Hohnen and his Parks and Gardens sub-committee have met throughout the year and monitored 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 dog walking community has responded favourably to the newly gazetted off leash area in Yarra Park. A herb garden project at the Library is being led by Siusan Mackenzie.

The major adverse issue continues to be the use of the heritage listed Yarra Park as a car park supporting events at the MCG, Melbourne and Olympic Parks. We are investigating how it is used more and more frequently for the events themselves, taken over by tents and infrastructure which excludes local users.

EMG Secretary, Stuart Hamilton, has continued as State Government representative on the Yarra Park Consultative Committee. EMG welcomes the recently announced further limitations on event parking in Yarra Park, particularly for major events and finals. This is a result of consultation with stakeholders including EMG and demonstrates renewed focus on safety and security.

Membership

With 15 members departed and 25 new members, numbers have increased from 453 last year to 463 current 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.

Finance

I now call on the Treasurer Tom Hogg to summarise our financial position.

Committee Opportunities

We have openings for Heritage and Planning, Social, Membership and Magazine Editor, whether Convenors or contributors. If you or someone you know would like to join the committee, please speak to me or Committee member. We have a lot of fun and strive to make a difference to East Melbourne.

Thank you

Ian Mitchell
President