

In August 1975 the Board adopted a set of policies to guide the development and management of its metropolitan parks. These policies were re-affirmed in August 1982.

During 1983 the Board reviewed the directions which the metropolitan parks were taking and on 25 October and 22 November determined a number of additional policies which refine earlier statements. They are printed below.

Land Resource

The Board resolved as objectives:

- * That there would be no net attrition of Proposed Public Open Space from the existing metropolitan parks.
- * To generally retain present boundaries.
- * To purchase land within the parks reservations as it comes onto the market.
- * To consider accepting land within the parks reservations from councils on the basis that it would be free of charge.

The Board will consider adding to the existing parks, parcels of adjoining land which had outstanding value for park purposes, whether or not zoned Proposed Public Open Space.

The Board accepted in principle the responsibility to manage, maintain and conserve the area 200 metres seaward of the high water mark at Point Cook Metropolitan Park and to control the public's use of that area.

Land Renovation

The Board adopted as policy:

- . In view of their scarcity, fragility, importance as habitat for wildlife and the affection which most people hold for them, natural vegetation remnants will be protected. Grazing of them will be avoided and disturbance minimised.
- . Stream frontages will be protected from grazing, cultivation and other forms of disturbance. No net filling in flood plains.
- . Hard rubbish will be removed to a recognised tip.
- . In order to aid catchment hydrology and for purification, drainage water will be retarded and soil infiltration encouraged.
- . Soil erosion will be minimised.
- . Boundary fences must be secure.
- . No buildings or sites of archaeological or historic value will be disrupted unless a thorough historical assessment had shown them not to warrant preservation.

Development

The Board adopted as policy:

- . Minimising recurrent costs must be a prime objective in the design and construction of any built facility.
- . Capital expenditures which are written off by consequent savings in maintenance over (say) a ten year period or less, should be considered.
- . Energy and water conservation must be prime objectives in the design and construction of any facility.
- . In order to reduce vandalism and increase community pride, a high standard of workmanship will be applied to every capital work.
- . Board resources will be used for design and implementation as far as practicable, even if more time is required to do so. Use of consultants will be limited to projects where specialist expertise is not available in the Board.
- . That the parks need not all be developed to the same standard.

Operations

The Board adopted as policy:

- . Priority will be given to the development of an efficient, trained Ranger service commensurate with the public value of the metropolitan parks system.
- . Maintenance standards will ensure that past capital investments are protected.
- . Public parks will be maintained at a level tolerable to public opinion.

Visitor Services

The Board adopted as policy:

- . Visitors are to be offered basic information about and orientation to park features and given opportunities to contact Board staff.
- . The Board aims to broaden visitors' perspectives of park recreation and encourage them to use the parks' recreational resources.
- . Parks will aim to provide a range of recreational and interpretative opportunities, suited to all ages and abilities and to the scale and diverse land-uses of the parks. Those non-destructive opportunities which are generally not catered for by councils or other providers of recreation will be emphasised.

- . Educational use of the parks will be encouraged and programs will be developed with curriculum specialists.
- . Rather than lead classes directly, the Board staff will assist teachers so that their children derive maximum benefit from their visits. Students will be involved in activities rather than simply be given talks or demonstrations by teachers or Board staff.

Income Potential

The Board resolved not to charge entrance fees but to charge for commercial groups to use the visitors centres.

Point Cook

The Board adopted the following objectives for the Park:

- (a) prepare a master plan of the Park, appoint a technical advisory committee and initiate a public participation program;
- (b) protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the natural and man-made resources of the Park for its biological, recreational, geological, scenic, educational and historic value;
- (c) retain and, where appropriate, enhance the vegetation of both indigenous and introduced plants in order to retain the open landscape and to reflect the character of a specific historic period wherever possible;
- (d) seek to have the Board's control extended to 200m from the high water mark - a report on the amending legislation necessary for this proposal was to be prepared and brought back to the Committee for appropriate action;
- (e) undertake and encourage research to assist in determining policies for management of the Park and restoration of historic features;
- (f) facilitate enjoyment of the Park for the community recognising the physical, psychological and ecological carrying capacity of the area;
- (g) prepare interpretative materials and programs for the enjoyment and enlightenment of park visitors and to assist in realising the objectives of park management;
- (h) assist schools, colleges, universities and community groups to facilitate educational use of the Park's resources;
- (i) retain grazing as an economical method of land management and to perpetuate the pastoral history of the area.

It was also resolved that the Board adopt as objectives for the Homestead Precinct that:

- (a) the 1860's will be adopted as the most appropriate period on which to model historic interpretation;
- (b) special interpretative programs which reflected the unique resource, including both living history and environmental living programs, will be developed.

It was further resolved that the Board adopt as objectives for the Farming Zone that:

- (a) grazing will be perpetuated for historic and scenic reasons and to minimise costs;
- (b) visual access by the public will be encouraged.

Further, that the Board adopt as objectives for the Beach Recreation Area that:

- (a) public entry to the dunes will be restricted;
- (b) structures will not be built in places likely to be subject to wave action;
- (c) any development will be limited to the already-developed nodes and that any extensions will be on the western side.

That the Board adopt as objectives for the Indigenous Biological Zones that:

- (a) public entry will be confined to limited tracks or walkways;
- (b) the zones will be managed to protect their diverse ecological features;
- (c) special importance will be placed upon preserving the habitat of international migratory birds.

And that the Board adopt as objectives for Aboriginal Resource Zones that:

- (a) the co-operation of the aboriginal community in interpreting the resource will be sought;
- (b) access for park visitors to significant archaeological sites will be strictly controlled.

The Board resolved to give priority to the development of the Homestead.

Braeside

The Board adopted the following objectives for the Park:

- (a) prepare a master plan of the Park and appoint a technical advisory committee, such committee to assist in the development of objectives for the park;
- (b) initiate a public participation program to ascertain public opinion on the future development of the Park at a later stage after development of the master plan;
- (c) protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the natural and man-made resources of the Park for its biological, recreational, geological, scenic, educational and historic value;
- (d) facilitate enjoyment of the Park for the community recognising the physical, psychological and ecological carrying capacity of the area;
- (e) give priority to conservation of the special ecological values associated with the remnant heathland;
- (f) keep development for recreation essentially low-cost to maintain the informal passive nature of the Park;
- (g) prepare interpretative materials and program for the enjoyment and enlightenment of park visitors and to assist in realising the objectives of park management;
- (h) undertake and encourage research to assist in determining policies for management of the Park;
- (i) provide additional or enhance existing "wet" areas to compensate for the loss of the sewage treatment ponds and thereby extend and retain the diversity of the avifauna of the area;
- (j) allow equestrian uses but not private agistment;

The Board further resolved that the development of Braeside Metropolitan Park is to be given a low priority at this stage.

International Park

The Board determined not to proceed with the project at the present time and that the subject land in the Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park should be used for productive agriculture for the next five years.

G P Edwards
G P EDWARDS
DEPUTY MANAGER