



## **Friends Of Royal Park Inc. – President’s Report 2015**

This year was one of considerable change in our community engagement operations.

After many years of hard work preserving this valuable resource – the open space – for the community of Buninyong, we have been approached by the City of Ballarat to consider allowing changes to the space for a multi-use facility which could include a soccer pitch.

At the time of writing this, the first stages of consultation are underway for the Royal Park Facilities Development Plan. It is comforting to see that the sustainable principles of this Committee of Management of Crown Land have been acknowledged and incorporated into the Project Brief by Council. Exciting times...

In January, the Cycling Australia event, the Nationals Time Trials, was hosted at Royal Park with the starting line just out on Warrenheip St. This partnership is expected to continue and brings an exciting event to Royal Park. With the help of the City of Ballarat, we were able to make ourselves presentable for this major event and tackle our ongoing issue of mowing before the fire season.

Following on the success of the first Smart Building and Living Expo, as part of the Sustainable Living Festival, we went back for seconds in February 2015. We were very pleased by the success of the day with over 1300 people attending and 40 stallholders exhibiting. This event was made possible through the generous support of our sponsors and our long term partners. A full report on this event can be seen on our webpage [www.friendsofroyalpark.org.au](http://www.friendsofroyalpark.org.au).

The monthly Produce Swaps where locals can swap excess produce from their gardens were continued until the Expo, before having a spell over Winter. The Federation University students were back again planting out in the community garden and learning how to deliver to the kids.

Funds were raised through Greensmart pot sales, mowing for Bendigo Bank, generating electricity from our photovoltaic array on the hall roof, and leasing the hall to community groups and individuals. We also receive some extra funds with thanks to Vicki for mowing for the Buninyong Community Bank and the Buninyong Foodworks rewards. We have decided to stop selling the Greensmart pots as it was taxing on our volunteers and the Expo is now self-funding.

We continued our association with other groups (BREAZE local food group, Ballarat Permaculture Guild, Leigh Catchment Group and Ballarat Cycle Group). A new yoga practice has started up using the hall regularly.

Our Facebook page and Twitter account continue to reach people way beyond the bounds of Buninyong – spreading our message to live more sustainably into the broader community. Thanks to all the committee members, subcommittee members, friends and business partners for all your hard work, loyalty and passion.

**Andrea Mason** 08th September 2015