**Mossvale Park Friends Group Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday March 7th 2024, 10am in the Park.

*Acknowledgement of Country –*

*'Our meeting is being held on the lands of the Gunaikurnai people and I wish to acknowledge them as Traditional Owners. I would also like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and Aboriginal Elders of other communities who may be here today.’*

Welcome; the meeting was called to order at 10.08am by Suzanne Wightman, our immediate past president.

Attendees; Suzanne welcomed Coral Hughes, Lynda Wightman, Wayne McKay, Richard Lester, Ian Starkey, Graeme Rowe, Jeremy Curtis and Jill Vella

Apologies; non received.

Minutes of Previous Meeting August 30th 2023; accepted as a true and correct M. Dick S. Coral

Business Arising from previous minutes.

Jill will follow up

* Management Plan and Letter of Understanding with the shire.
* National trust
* Risk assessment for working bees – we have one need to print them out for use
* Also, first aid kit for working bee including snake bite kit

Vale Rodney Emmerson

Dick represented the Friends group at Rodney’s funeral. The text of his eulogy is appended.

Reports -

Working Bees; working bees are held on the first Thursday of the month and weeding and mulching have taken place over the last few months.

Plan to use Jeremy’s tractor to move mulch up onto the hill

Irrigation pipes exposed for mulch (this need clarification at next meeting)

Requirement for risk assessment before each working bee and first aid kit on site

Tree Reports;

Poplars need work in the glade. The suckers are out of control

High humidity causing some fungus problems and leaf loss. Need to monitor.

The yate on Jeremys boundary has died back but is re suckering. The dead bit needs to be removed.

There are a number of plants to plant after the autumn break including native frangipani and blueberry ash.

Floodplain trees need to be chosen the flood prone areas

Steve Missen report; not received. Jill to contact Steve to see if he is still the most suitable Shire/ Friends liaison person.

Management plan; Jill to follow up with Shire. Also the ephemeral wetland is highly valued so we need to create a water/wetland strategy and plan.

Mapping/Webb/Sign Report; one of our banners – the join the friends group in the park has been stolen/destroyed

General Business;   
ivy is still a problem, and is returning to Mossvale Park road after seemingly successful removal.

Next Meeting; 2 May in the park after the working bee at 10.00am. Meeting to begin at 11.30am. Bring food and coffee so we can work through lunch.

Richard Lesters eulogy for Rodney Emmerson.

Dear Rodney - Dear Man of the Land & Nature - our Dear friend 🌱

As a 22 year old country boy I found lasting reassurance & comfort in nature when I returned home from my Vietnam service in the late 1960’s & assisted my tree loving Mum - Mary, to replant tree cover on our family farm 🌱

Around this time, the Emmerson family were already both noted & budding, local Leongatha horticulturists & son Rodney began to blossom 🌱

Later, Rodney, became our well regarded, loved & prize winning horticulturist 🌱

Our Daffodil Champion 🌱

I first worked with Rodney in the 1980’s, when I was Shire Head Gardener, at a time of much needed, positive attention, maintenance & improvements at MVP 🌱

So over nearly 40 years, I have so enjoyed sharing & choosing many MVP tree plantings with Rodney & our many Public MVP walks & tree talks 🌱

Rodney was so thrilled & energised at our many tree plantings, particularly the recent plantings of his prized Magnolias - Dolly Horn, Katie Jones, his Pink Macdamia & others - he loved & cared about them dearly 🌱

In the 1980s, with the past, generous support from noted pioneer Mossvale Nurseryman Francis Moss’s extended family & friends, Rodney arranged many tree plantings, which encouraged a more dedicated interest & support from Council & a growing number of other MVP supporters 🌱

Rodney knew the history of MVP well, when weedy plant species became a major concern & grazing sheep had ring barked trees & left their messy calling cards 🌱 Today - what a difference - all well noted in Ellen Lyndon’s “Story of Mossvale Park”, in 1994 🌱

Rodney may not have been the finest of gardeners, but he loved & cared for the land & his trees, so, in many important ways MVP became Rodney’s horticultural place to be, his pride, his passion & his love - as for so many others, the increasing beauty & amenities at MVP makes it such a special place for us all to go for peace, enjoyment, inspiration & relaxation 🌱

In 2019, an eager gathering of Rodney’s Horticultural Friends proudly met at MVP to plant, celebrate & dedicate a Liquid Amber CV “Oakville Highlights” in appreciation of his broad Horticultural knowledge, love & dedication to plants 🌱

Now - that young, dedicated tree is a healthy & special tribute & legacy to your special life work & love 🌱 As I pass it, I will pause at times for a chat & some advice 🌱.

I now so understand - To plant & care for a tree is a lasting expression of our feelings - a need for love, healthy spiritual healing, wellbeing & peace 🌱.

Dear Rodney, may you Rest In Peace - in Nature - your work at MVP, since the 1960s, has helped make it one of the most important & finest trees-capes in Victoria 🌱

In 2013, I was asked to write a personal, horticultural reference for Rodney, for Shire Citizen of the Year, but, unfortunately, but maybe expectedly, he refused to be nominated 🌱

Dear quirky, modest, thoughtful & generous Rodney - Always the Quiet Achiever 🌱

Thank you, our special love to you & your loving family 🌱 Your fine tree legacy will always live on 🌱

You have positively affected us all, in your own very special way 🌱

Dick Lester