**Save Albert Park Inc. A0040971X**

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**SAPmail January 4, 2024**

**John Pilger, 1931- 2023, ‘a giant of journalism’ who supported the SAP campaign**

The death of John Pilger on December 30 was reported in The Age on January 2. The report quoted *WikiLeaks* as saying “The veteran journalist, writer and filmmaker was a ferocious speaker of truth to power …”. *The Conversation* described him as ‘a giant of journalism’. He was brought up in Bondi, but spent most of his professional life in London.

In 1995, Save Albert Park was privileged to have John Pilger’s support for our campaign. This came about following contact with him being made by SAP member, Shirley Shackleton, during SAP’s ‘London Rally’. (Shirley’s husband, Greg, was one of the ‘Balibo Five’ journalists murdered by Indonesian soldiers in 1975. Shirley devoted most of her life to campaigning for justice for the East Timorese people.)

It appears that Shirley interested John Pilger in SAP’s campaign against the Grand Prix and he agreed to write the ‘Introduction’ to SAP’s publication ‘No Entry’, a ‘photo essay’ by Nina Landis. Below is an extract from this item (with some very minor edits).

*The facts concerning what powerful interests are doing to Albert Park are astonishing if you accept the claim of the Victorian Government that it is presiding over a democracy.*

*The Kennett regime struck its deal with Ecclestone entirely in secret. An Act of Parliament without precedent anywhere in the democratic world was hurried through that exempted the Grand Prix from the Freedom of Information Act and from all laws governing environmental matters and planning controls. It allowed the Australian Grand Prix Corporation to fence or cordon off any area it wanted. Trespassing carried a fine of up to $2000. No resident whose home was damaged by construction of the racetrack could claim compensation.*

*The equivalent in Britain would be for Londoners to be told one day that Hyde Park was to become a motor racing circuit, and that they were specifically prevented by law from doing anything about it. That not even the heirs of Thatcherism would dare to impose such a thing is a measure of Kennett’s crime.*

*Certainly, the uprooting of 400 great trees in a single day is as great an environmental atrocity as any I have known, anywhere. The truth is that political authority has discredited itself in the state of Victoria.*

*What the government is allowing to happen in Albert Park is a crime.*

*And it must be stopped.*

Note 1: Limited copies of “No Entry” are still available to SAP members.

Note 2: Could the person who did an e-transfer of $60 into the SAP account on 17 November 2023 please contact Greg Byrne on greg-byrne@bigpond.com.