



This is parkland! Yes, this is how our state government likes to see it. The picture shows Turn 1 of the grand prix circuit which is one of the turns to be made to be made even wider to allow higher speeds and to improve the 'quality' of the racing. (See Page 3 for more information on the changes being made to the park roads)

Picture ref: planetf1, 'No more parade races at Albert Park' 20/2/21

Sports clubs, the grand prix and the City of Port Phillip

Readers will recall that our February issue focussed on the sports clubs based in Albert Park and the disruptive effect the grand prix has on their operation. Added to this is the feeling that the City of Port Phillip has 'turned its back' on the clubs.

We have sent a copy of the February *SAPIENS* to each of the nine newly elected councillors with a covering letter expressing our support for the Clubs and outlining our reasons for opposing the event in the park. We have had a response from five of the Councillors, including the Mayor, Louise Crawford, who stated: *'I know that we support the sporting facilities in Albert Park (State Government land) in a number of ways, including championing them in State and Federal funding grants rounds at various points each year.'*

The Mayor has undertaken to respond further. We await the final outcome of our approach to the councillors.

'Greenwashing'

As reported in our February issue, Formula 1 is claiming that sustainability is a major focus in their operations. We suggested that this was just a 'con job' and pointed out that during the racing the cars consume about 50 litres per 100m km, 10 times the rate of a modern light family car.

However, while the cars are undoubtedly 'gas guzzlers', emissions generated during racing represent only 7% of F1 racing's total carbon footprint of around 256,550 tonnes per year. About 73% is generated by all road, air and sea transport of teams and F1 equipment, Paddock Club equipment, race tyres and fuel., plus business travel and associated activities. The remaining 20% is generated by the operation of offices and factories. These figures have been published by F1 itself.

A search of the web on the subject turned up an article on the US website 'cleantechnica .com' which on 30/4/19 ran an article headed **'The gigantic carbon footprint of Formula One'**. This article commented: *'The sports's concern for lowering its carbon footprint is nothing more than greenwashing. While the powers that be are busy patting themselves on the back for taking action to protect the earth, each of the ten teams in Formula One spend almost as much time in the air as they do on the ground. They each lug between 50 and 100 tons (51- 102 tonnes) of cars and spare parts to each if the 21 faces on the calendar, covering more than 110,000 air miles (177,000 km) every year. The teams don't just travel with cars and mechanics . They bring ostentatious mobile headquarters and hospitality centres with them everywhere they go to impress local dignitaries and their high roller sponsors.'*

With the Melbourne grand prix, added to the air travel emissions are the emissions from the setting up and dismantling of the temporary circuit in Albert Park. This involves 66,000 km of

road travel by heavy trucks, carrying 40,000 tonnes of circuit infrastructure (including 6000 tonnes of gravel needed to create run-offs at circuit corners) to and from an Altona storage yard. This truck travel generates not only carbon monoxide which adds significantly to the event's carbon footprint, but toxic nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide and 'diesel particulate matter' which are harmful to the health of the public.

The 'cleantecnica' website quoted above also made the following interesting comment regarding the early history of Formula One, when it was run by Bernie Ecclestone. ***'While television made the teams fabulously wealthy, it slowly killed the sport. Ecclestone decided to focus solely on the 'show' - the hype and hoopla that surrounds the racing, rather than the racing itself. He sold the sport to national leaders as a way to advertise their countries to the world.'***

'Existential threat'

On February 26, 'The Conversation' published a comprehensive evaluation of Australia's environmental situation, conducted by four researchers based in universities in Victoria, NSW and the UK. This study found that 19 major ecosystems were collapsing across the Australian continent. The study concluded that environmental boundaries, such as the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere which allowed human and other life forms to exist were being crossed and that crossing these boundaries could cause changes so profound as to pose an "existential threat" to humanity. The study also referred to the 1992 warning by 1,700 scientists that human beings and the natural world were "on a collision course".

While these dire predictions are being made by environmental experts, here in Victoria we have successive state governments which choose to ignore the environmental facts and continue to promote high emission Formula 1 motor racing and find nothing wrong with staging it in public parkland in a temporary circuit.

The Conversation is a global website founded in Australia in 2011. In 2014, a US base was established in Boston and other sites have been established in Africa, Canada, France, Indonesia, New Zealand and the UK. It is a non-profit independent organization dedicated to publishing trustworthy news and information written by academic experts. *The Conversation* arose out of concerns for the fading quality of the media generally. The US website has this to say, which SAP would thoroughly endorse:

Information has always been essential for democracy. It's a societal good, like clean water. But many now find it difficult to put their trust in the media. Instead they listen to those who have the loudest voices. Those uniformed views are amplified by social media networks that reward those who spark outrage instead of insight or thoughtful discussion.

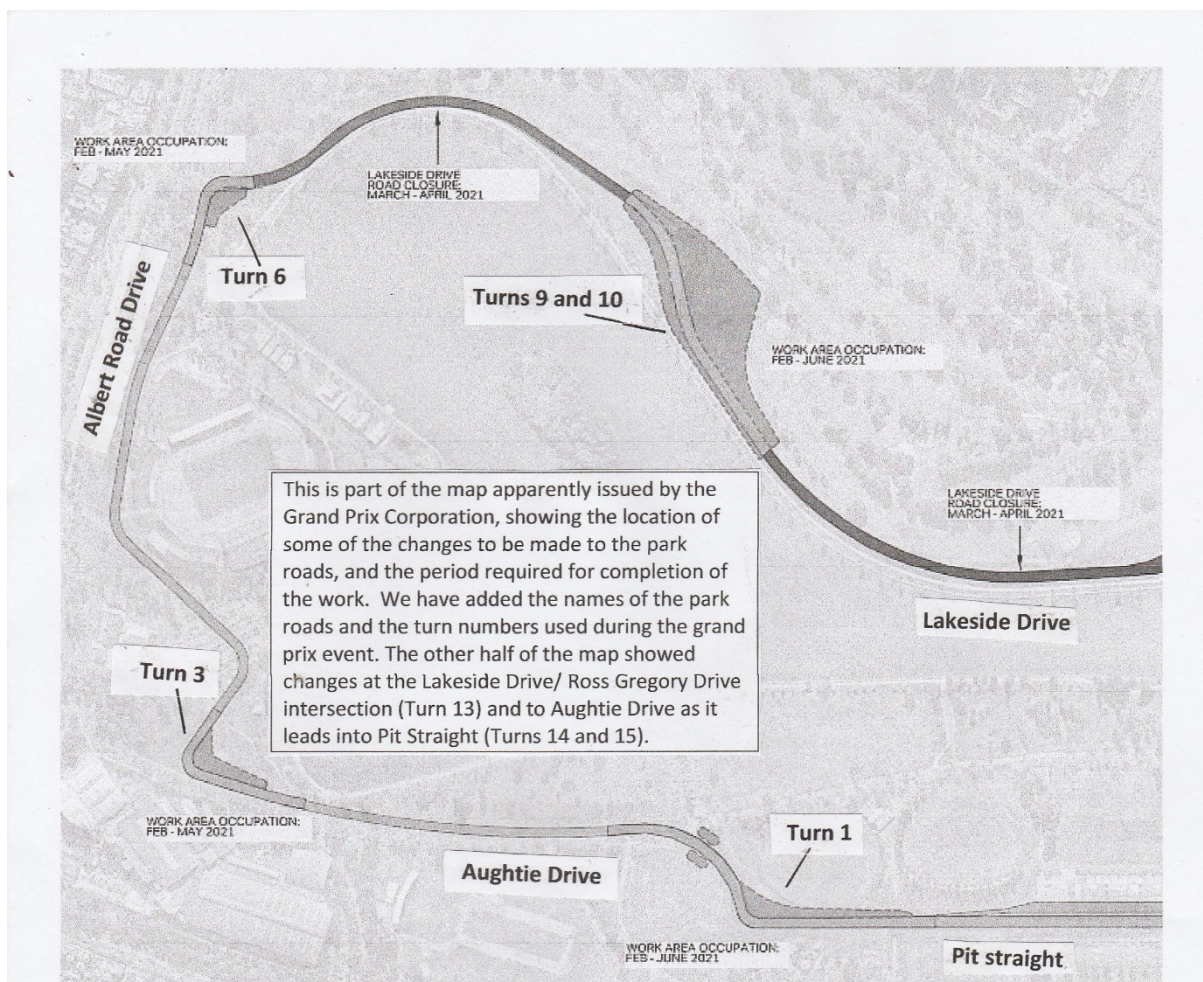
SAP vs the Australian Press Council

In April 2020, SAP lodged a complaint with The Australian Press Council regarding an editorial and a journalist's report in the *Herald Sun* in March which stated that more than 300,000 people typically attended a grand prix event, and that the 2019 event attracted 324,000 people. SAP maintained that the editorial and the journalists report were false and misleading, and cited ticket sales prices, total revenue and seat numbers as evidence.

A reply to the complaint was received on February 24, 2021. The APC stated that the complaint would not be considered because *'while it may have been preferable for the publication to use the word 'estimated', the reported figure of 324,000 appears accurate. In relation to this, the AGPC website states 'an estimated attendance of 324,000 fans at the Formula 1 Rolex Australian Grand Prix 2019 helped smash a 14-year record.'*

It should have been obvious that the newspaper reports quoted the AGPC's published figure, but the reply from the Press Council indicates that no attempt whatever was made to check the accuracy of this figure, and remarkably, just quoted it back to SAP as justification for refusing to consider the complaint. SAP considers this reply to be in contradiction to the Press Council's Principal No.1 which states: *'Ensure that factual material in news reports and elsewhere is accurate and not misleading and is distinguishable from other material such as opinion'*.

The Press Council is based in Sydney. It has 22 members, including 10 independent 'public members', nine nominees from the major media organizations and three independent journalists. It should have been able to do a much better professional job with SAP's complaint.



“No more parade races at Albert Park” (*planet F1.com*, Feb.2021)

On February 12, the Grand Prix Corporation issued an information sheet setting out changes to be made to the Albert Park roads in preparation for the next grand prix event. (The diagram above shows some of the locations of the changes). It was stated that the changes “will deliver many exciting community benefits aligned with the Albert Park Master Plan.” However, the sole real purpose of the changes is to respond to criticism that the racing at Albert Park has been largely processional, or ‘parades’ (the term used by the planetF1 website). Faster and more competitive grand prix racing is planned to be achieved by widening Turns 1, 3, 6, 9,10, 14 and 15, and modifying the camber and smoothing of Turn 13 (at the junction of Lakeside Drive and Ross Gregory Drive).

In addition to the changes to the circuit configuration, it is planned to resurface the roads with a special asphalt to achieve a rough finish with the intention of increasing ‘tyre degradation’. This is apparently a desirable feature of the best grand prix tracks. It should also be of considerable interest to normal park road users.

The international website, motorsport.com, reported on February 19 that the Grand Prix CEO, Andrew Westacott had stated: “The changes were based on simulations from Formula 1 and consultation with the likes of Mark Webber and a number of Formula 1 drivers.”

Parks Victoria was also apparently consulted but we suspect they were just told what was going to happen. Certainly the Victorian community, which owns and pays for the park’s maintenance was not consulted.

The ‘exciting community benefits’ listed in the Corporation’s information sheet include:

- *Additional on-street parking along Lakeside drive, Ross Gregory Drive and Aughtie Drive (to be achieved by cutting into adjacent parkland as turns are smoothed out)
- *Safer traffic arrangements for road and park users (no explanation provided, perhaps drivers slowing down to avoid degrading their tyres)
- *Pit Lane planter boxes to enhance Aughtie Drive streetscape (this was tried in the nineties but soon abandoned),
- *New line marking across the entire circuit with improved cycling corridors (some actual benefit?).

Disbenefits to the community arising from these changes include significant road closures. Lakeside Drive will be closed for over a month (March 2 - April 11) and for three days in late April, and partly closed at the Ross Gregory Drive intersection for two weeks, April 10 – 23. There is also the cost of the changes and resurfacing which diverts public funds away from socially beneficial projects (such as public housing) or to carry out real park improvements proposed in the Master Plan. The Corporation's information sheet has invited questions from the public about the circuit changes. The big question is the cost, and we are still waiting for an answer to that.

Question can be directed to communityrelations@grandprix.com.au, and a community relations representative will 'promptly respond'.

Economic benefits of major events almost entirely fictitious

Jeff Kennett had an article published in the Herald Sun on February 2 in which he lauded the Melbourne Convention Centre on South Bank for having brought 'untold millions of dollars' to our shores by means of business events. Jeff of course was responsible for dumping the Labor plan to use the site for the Melbourne Museum. The Convention Centre is a permanent venue and employs around 1000 people so it stands a chance of actually making a profit and it also provides a significant number of full time jobs. However, the economic benefit from the 'new money' brought in from overseas would be most enjoyed by the casino and the big city hotels (many interstate or offshore owned), with not much trickling down to the Victorian public.

Jeff was also responsible for bringing the F1 grand prix into Albert Park and the millions of dollars lost on this event are not 'untold'; they represent around \$700 million in race hosting fees sent offshore plus other costs which bring the total losses to over a billion dollars.

For the last 20-30 years, mainstream economists have been saying that the economic benefits from government funded major event are almost entirely fictitious. Even the hard right wing Institute of Public Affairs has stated that the grand prix event should be discontinued.



This photo (published in the *Herald Sun* on May 25, 1995) shows a group of SAP protesters led through the park by Jon Diedrich and Iain Stewart. SAP had just won a court case which declared the grand prix in the park was illegal. Charges against 88 protesters had been dismissed. The Kennett state government was forced to rush through special legislation to render the event legal.

SAP Members update We still remain deprived of our office and meeting room in the South Melbourne Town Hall. We plan to have our postponed 2020 Annual General Meeting on March 27, and details of this meeting are shown in the Members Supplement.

SAP contacts:

Media spokesman: Peter Logan Tel 0412 697 074

Membership: Greg Byrne Tel 9645 1301

SAPIENS: Peter Goad Tel 0407 192 455 (interim number only)