

# LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

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*An irregular one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy*

## Lex throws a Dinner Party (Not sure when)

**A dinner for 20 people, at least. All in close proximity, shaking hands, clinking glasses, laughing, singing and even dancing.**

But when? Maybe Cup Day, maybe Lunar New Year, maybe next Anzac Day...

**And where?**

It will have to be on public land, of course. Lex is tossing up between the Sky High on Mt Dandenong and the Terrace Café in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Seems the Mt Buffalo Chalet will still not have been rebuilt.

There are numerous restaurants on the shores of Port Phillip, but for Lex they are overshadowed by the Great Point Ormond Fiasco of 1965. In that year the Bolte Government passed legislation: this was the place for a restaurant, overlooking the Bay. Tenders were called, a contract was awarded, building was about to commence.

Then the protests started. Trades unionists joined forces with conservationists to force a rethink. It took eight years, but the *St Kilda (Ormond Restaurant) Land Act 1973* revoked the whole proposal and compensated the tenderer.

**As Lands Minister Bill Borthwick told parliament:** *"Where public land is involved - the type of land that attracts people to it - facilities provided should not in themselves be designed to attract people to the area, but only to serve people who would normally go there for recreational purposes."*

Here was the basis of a new public land policy. Facilities should be ancillary to the attraction, they should not become the principal attraction.

**Has the Borthwick policy survived?**

Lex wonders about visitor centres in National Parks. He has seen busloads of whistle-stop tourists taking selfies - not in front of the mountain, but in front of the big photo of the mountain on the wall of the visitor centre. The actual park has been usurped by its own visitor centre.

Lex looks forward to going to the beach (on Cup Day, or Lunar New Year, or next Anzac Day) but finds himself wondering exactly why. Will his primary purpose be to swim and sunbake, or to have lunch? Which purpose will be ancillary to the other?



**Anyway, he's chosen a venue for his post-virus dinner party: Proudfoot's Boathouse at Warrnambool.**

Bill Borthwick might argue that the Hopkins River is the actual attraction, and the boathouse merely freeloards off it - but it's been there since 1885, and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, so Lex feels it has become a public land attraction in its own right.

Besides, they do a great seafood fettuccini, with fennel.

**See you there!**  
**Lex Loci**



*The Hopkins River is in Gunditjmara country  
Point Ormond is in Boon Wurrung country*

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