

LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

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An occasional one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy

Lex Veges Out at (you guessed it) Veg Out

It's a great place to veg out for a bit. Whether you're lucky enough to be a plot-holder, or just a passer-by.

And there are plenty of passers-by, here behind St Kilda's Acland Street shops, just up from the beach, alongside Luna Park.

Lex hasn't tried to count the individual garden plots. They're a tangle of flowers, vines, vegetables, compost bins and improvised sculptures. There are wind chimes made from kitchen utensils.



Most suburban gardeners would be horrified, but Veg-Out isn't suburban, it's community.

Not so long ago this was a nice neat tidy lawn bowling green, occupied by neatly uniformed members of the St Kilda Bowling Club. So what happened?

What happened was social and demographic change. Change in urban form, density and mobility, bringing corresponding change in lifestyle and leisure patterns. The community changed, and public land had to respond.

In the late 1990s lawn bowling was in decline. In parallel, 'the community' was in the ascendancy. One way or another, the Council

was persuaded to terminate the bowlers' tenure (evict is too harsh a word) and grant tenure to the community group now known as *Veg Out Community Gardens St Kilda Inc.*

Lex has some questions...

- **What's this 'Inc.' business?** The current occupier is Veg Out Inc. The previous occupier was the Bowling Club Inc. Each was established under the Act now known as the *Associations Incorporations Reform Act 2012*. Veg Out has 100+ members, but it's also a legal person in its own right. It is capable of entering into contracts, buying and selling, suing and being sued. And it's competent to hold a lease or licence under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* – but not to be a Committee of Management.

- **Why the Associations Incorporation 'Reform' Act?** Here we have a legislative curiosity. From time to time many Acts get amended – one might even say *reformed* – but by and large they retain their previous names. (For instance the *Local Government Act 1989* was amended 150 times before eventually being replaced altogether.) But in 2012 the Minister concerned chose to celebrate his fairly routine amendments by changing the very name of the Act.

- **Can I still go bowling?** Bowling still happens elsewhere in St Kilda – but not in the traditional black and white bowlers' garb. At the Fitzroy Street end of Albert Park you'll find the barefoot beer-in-hand bowlers, who may or may not pay their rent to Parks Victoria – but that's another story...

Just at the moment, Lex puts all these questions aside. He just wants to listen to the wind chimes. And veg out.

See you there! Lex Loci
Veg Out is in Boon Wurrung Country