



# ponderings

Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee  
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*Kelvin Thompson, Member for Wills, is flanked by butt beauties Maddie (left) and Mel (right) for the launch of the Butt It Bin It campaign at North Melbourne Train station on October 1st. The campaign was organized by Nicolette Rose—Moonee Ponds Creek Keep It Clean project co-ordinator. She sure knows how to get a message across!*

**More on Page 2**

## co-ordinators ramblings...

Welcome to the Spring edition of Ponderings, the third we have produced since last year. As you can see, we have swelled from an 8 to a massive 12 page spread this issue. This is mostly due to the incredible response we had at this Spring's planting season; more than double the volunteers turned up to plant triple the number of plants than in the Autumn planting season. Very inspiring!

We have been very lucky (and grateful) this season to have been able to borrow fellow creek buddies MCMC's ute, affectionately known as 'Jackie'. Without her pulling our trailer we just couldn't have done it. For the full details on the planting season, turn to page 4. It's certainly kept us (and you) very busy, but there's even more

creeky stuff that's been happening at MPCCC headquarters—read all about it! And there's more to come....

Recently we attended the launch of Penola Catholic College's Source to Sea project, an exciting pilot program initiated by Carolyn Layton with support from MPCCC and creeky residents, including Julie Law & Vince Aitken. Sixty year 9 students will be participating in special projects along the Moonee Ponds Creek. They will form eight focus groups including: the Oral Historians, Photographic Historians, Water Quality, Bike Safety, Frogs, and Media teams. We look forward to telling you more about this project in the Summer edition of Ponderings.

There are also more creeky events to be attended, including our upcoming November weed walk where you get a chance to explore the wonderful world of medicinal weedy herbs and of course our annual Christmas party. Details can be found on page 11.

We have also been hard at work on our webpage & soon hope to bring you an electronic version of Ponderings by late November. In colour!

Thanks to all the MPCCC team & helpers who worked so hard to make this planting season a success: Elissa, Maddie, Nicolette & Natasha, Steph & Dave. You're the best.

*Melanie Taube ,  
mpccc co-ordinator*

## In this issue

**2 "Butt's" the word.**  
*The latest from the Keep It Clean Project*

**3 Be my friend**  
*what it means to care for the creek*

**4-7 Spring Planting Season**  
*4 page spread—it's huge!*

**8 Royal Park Wetlands—the future's looking clear for the Moonee Ponds Creek**

**11 Strathnaver grasslands—where have all the pretties gone?**

## Regular articles

**9 Creek Memories**  
*Kim and Pam ran amok along the Five Mile Creek*

**10 People Like Us**  
*Platypus Care—Looking out for Platypus*

**12 Plant Star of the Season**  
*Small-leafed Clematis—A bush delicacy*

**12 Spring Sightings**  
*Birds, birds, and more birds*

**11 Upcoming events**

# it's a load of of rubbish!

Nicolette Rose gives us the low down on recent 'eye-catching' events from the Keep it Clean Project....

## butt it bin it campaign

As the creek's very own garbage girl, I can tell you that there's been plenty of action on the litter front of late! For those of you who haven't seen the posters on your local train station, we've just launched our "No butts about it this is litter" campaign along the Broadmeadows & Upfield train lines.



This has been a very exciting project and we have been working with a number of other organisations including M>Train, the Victorian Litter Action Alliance and EcoRecycle Victoria. The program aims to educate smokers that throwing their butts away *IS* littering and encourages them to do the right thing: butt it and bin it, in a bin or a personal ashtray.

Apart from the posters, we've been giving personal ashtrays (made from recycled film canisters) to shops selling cigarettes near railway stations, these are to be given away to customers buying cigarettes. We will also be running drain stenciling activities around railway stations.

*The butt of a few jokes—Maddie shows how sad a discarded butt can be*



## drain stencils

“...litter goes down the drain and ends up in the creek, something that is often forgotten!”

In other news, we have had two fabulous **drain stenciling kits** developed. The stencils feature the Moonee Ponds Creek swamp hen and are designed to be stenciled on the top of concrete drains pit lids. The message “care for our creek, rubbish lives in bins” is designed to reinforce the idea that litter goes down the drain and ends up in the creek, something that is often forgotten!

One of the kits has been donated to Brunswick Secondary College who are running regular drain stenciling activities with students. The other kit is available for use by schools, community groups and councils. Moonee Valley Council also has drain stenciling kits available for use by groups in Moonee Valley.

Stenciling is not only educational, but great fun so let me know if you would like more information.



*Funky drain stencils showing the MPCCC swamphen mascot will paint a clear message about stormwater and litter*

## and what's more...

On the event front, we held the launch of the **Sydney Road Community Fix Up** project and a celebration for the success of the 2003 planting season.

The community fix up project has seen students from Brunswick Secondary College working with traders to develop solutions to reducing cigarette butt litter along Sydney Road. The launch was held at Brunswick Town Hall on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October—more details in Summer Ponderings.

Other projects in the pipe-line include a sports ground litter project and of course planning for plenty of clean up action for Clean Up Australia Day in the new year.

If you would like more info about the Keep it Clean project or want to get involved please contact Nicolette on 9333 2406 or [nic@mpccc.org](mailto:nic@mpccc.org).

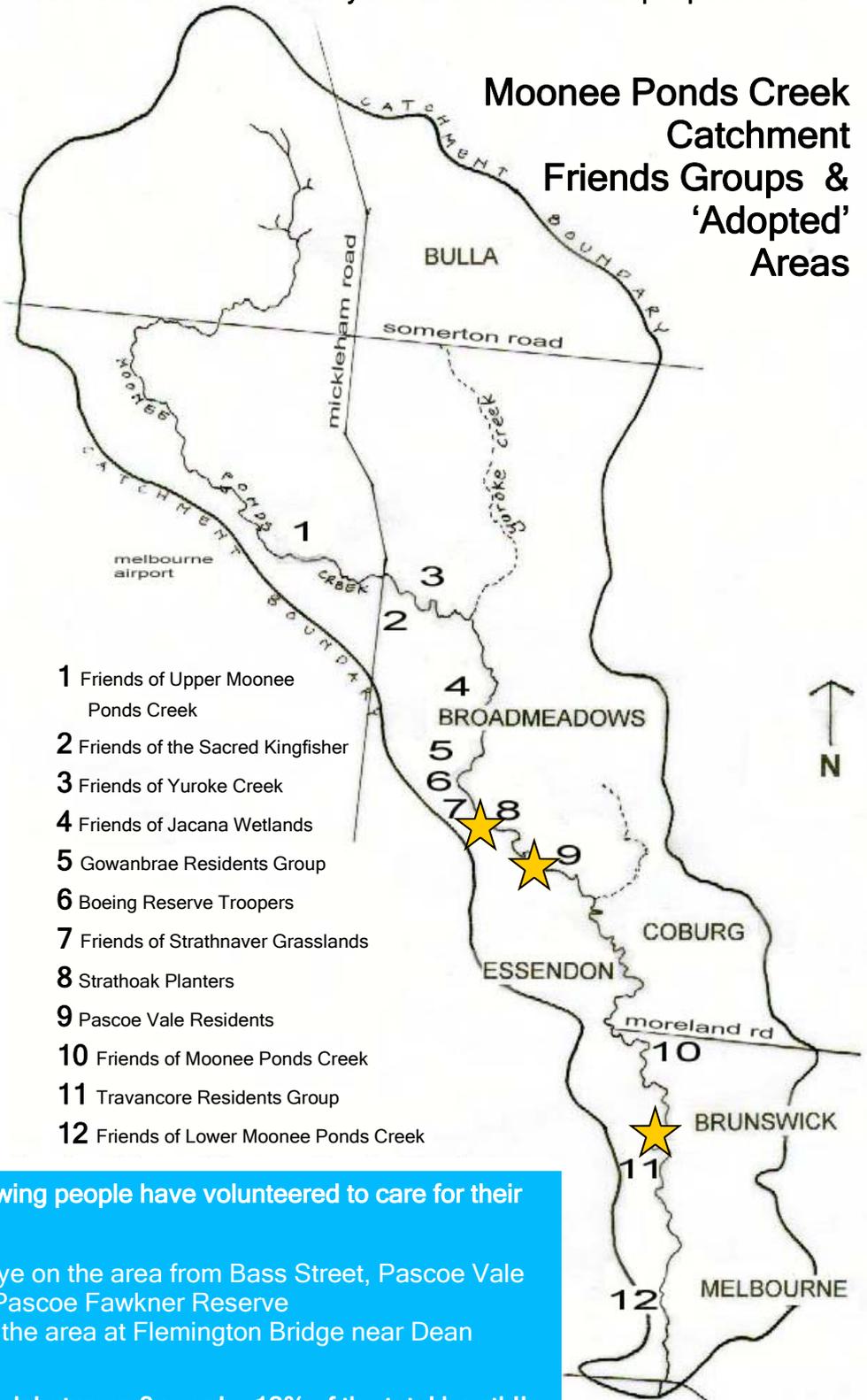
# someone to watch over me

Since the winter issue of ponderings Andrew Gemmell's call for carers of the creek was answered by some keen local residents who value their piece of the creek. The map shows where our current friends groups are spreading out along the creek and where people are volunteering to keep their eye on an area near where they live. Carolyn Layton is a teacher at Penola Secondary College in Broadmeadows. She tells us why she feels motivated to adopt a piece of the creek:

I decided to 'adopt' a section of the creek after reading Andrew's article in the last issue. Since I have lived in Oak Park near the creek for the past few years, I decided to take on the section I most often walk along. That's the bit between the footbridge near Strathmore North Primary School and the next footbridge near the Oak Park Tennis Courts. It's an interesting and varied section with great views and quite a lot of wildlife. It starts where the concrete finishes. Incidentally, I've heard that it was an Oak Park resident years ago who very actively and successfully opposed the march of the concrete further up the creek. My children and I have a few favorite parts in this section. One of these is the ford near the plant nursery where we often see a White-faced Heron looking for food. Once there was a native water rat swimming along the edge of the reeds when the water was high after rains, and at other times we have recorded frog calls near here.

As for what it means to adopt a section, I will probably keep doing some rubbish collection and will keep an informal record of our wildlife sightings. I would like to take part in Frogwatch again this spring and register the section for the Clean Up Australia Day in March next year. I enjoy the thought of being part of a community of people looking after the creek all along its length as the "adopt a section" idea is aiming to foster. If anyone is also interested in this section I'd be pleased to hear from you!

Carolyn Layton  
clayton@penola.melb.catholic.edu.au



**★ As well as Carolyn the following people have volunteered to care for their patch of the creek:**

- *Nina Eason* will be keeping an eye on the area from Bass Street, Pascoe Vale near Lebanon Reserve to John Pascoe Fawkner Reserve
- *Lyndsey Burton* will be adopting the area at Flemington Bridge near Dean Street, Moonee Ponds

**That's approximately 4km of the creek between 3 people..12% of the total length!!**

As you can see from the map, there are plenty of areas in between friends groups that need a watchful eye. Perhaps you live near one of these friends groups and would like to join in or prefer to keep to a local area you know well. If you are interested please contact Andrew Gemmell on [gemmell@a1.com.au](mailto:gemmell@a1.com.au)

# Our most success

A huge THANK YOU to all who helped in Spring to plant along our beloved creek in what has been our most successful season by far! (hence the double-double page spread) In Autumn, if you all recall, we had 192 people planting 2,590 plants. This season 414 volunteers planted a fantastic 8,262 trees, shrubs and grasses!

That means that in 2003...Drum roll please....

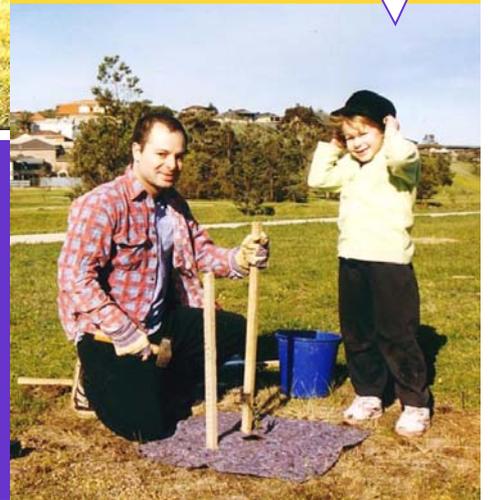
**28 planting days were held where 721 volunteers put in an amazing 11,552 native plants along Moonee Ponds Creek!**  
**And that's not counting all those plant giveaways that now grace your backyards - my head's starting to spin.**



## Gowanbrae Residents, Adelaide Blvd, Gowanbrae

A lovely sunny (but very windy!) day launched the Spring planting season on 3<sup>rd</sup> August. 18 people successfully planted 100 scattered trees. We made friends with the Victorian Boomerang Throwing Association, and now know to give their throwing area a 50 metre clearance. On their second planting day in September, 17 people & 1 baby, planted 420 tubestock to further beautify the footbridge beds.

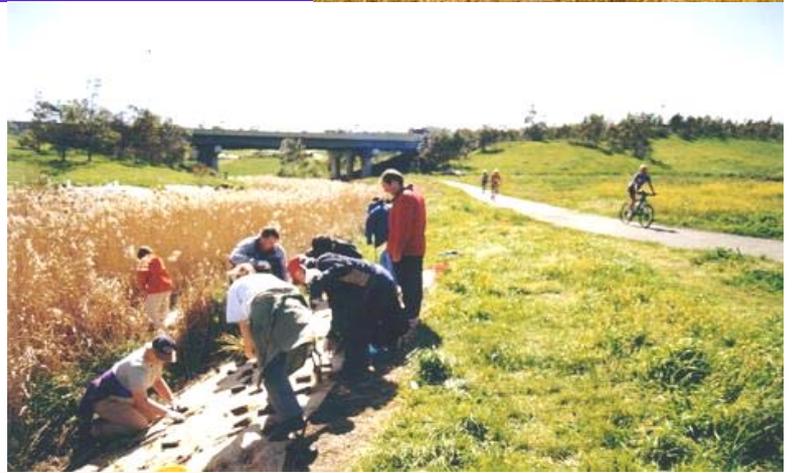
*Terrific tree-planters : Greg and Lauren give their tree a good start*



*Mel hands out well-earned lollies to our enthusiastic Kensington planters*

## Friends of Lower Moonee Ponds Creek, Bruce Street, Kensington

This area received quite a bit of attention this Spring starting with August's planting day where 24 people planted 150 tubes & 100 poa cells. We were approached by Dorothy from the Ascot Vale Anglican Church who was keen to hold a special planting day in October. This was attended by 18 people. 150 tubestock and 100 cells were successfully planted. Inspired by group leader, Kaye, a new mulched bed in Bruce Street was created, where previously it was a weedy eyesore. Due to its proximity to the road and an underground gas line this was a job for the contractors who planted 198 native ground-covers.



*The Friends of Jacana Wetlands believe that those who plant together stay together - or maybe it just protects the kids from being blown away*

## Friends of Jacana Wetlands, Jacana Wetlands

This group is quite amazing. Their August planting day was a shocker! Howling cold winds, icy rain right at sausage eating time. And yet 21 people turned up to plant 275 tubestock into the west creek bank. And I was sure that it was going to be our first post-poned planting....In September (better weather this time) 16 people helped to put 295 plants into the east creek bank. They were treated to the beautiful vision of four wild swans flying together over the wetlands. It was "definitely a feel good day!"

# ful season...ever!



## Friends of the Sacred Kingfisher Wyton Close, Westmeadows

Hume City council coordinated this sunny planting day. 23 volunteers, including the 1<sup>st</sup> TullaPark Scout group planted 378 tubestock along the creek bank.

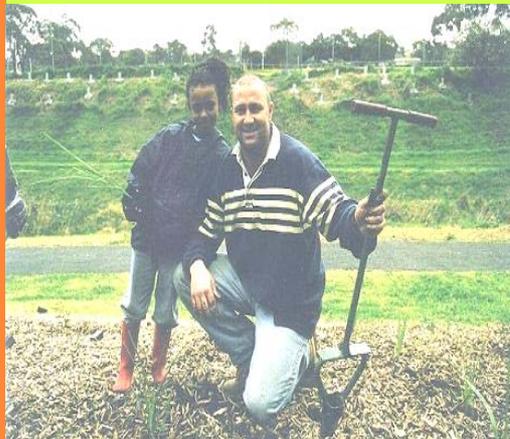


*Friends inspired in their quest to provide a green haven for the Sacred Kingfisher*

*Students from Greenvale Primary know -f our hands make the trees grow twice as fast*

## Greenvale Primary School Ian Soutter's Property, Somerton Road, Greenvale

Despite vigorous winds and a sudden down-pour of rain we had a fun morning with the Sally's 22 grade 3 & 4 students from Greenvale Primary School. Many of the parents joined us too which was terrific and together we planted an impressive 355 tubestock. Thank you to DPI staff Natasha, Charles, and Rob for their help in organising the day. Thanks also to Ian Soutter for hosting the planting. A big grateful thank you goes to Ian's neighbors Joan and Mavis for allowing all 36 of us to invade their verandah during the deluge, and lending us their carport for the BBQ.



*Jason and his daughter are proud to be part of the new StrathOak Planters*

## New name! 'The StrathOak Planters' Brosnan Cres, Strathmore

On their second planting day 28 people helped to plant 275 tubestock and 100 grass cells, to extend and beautify the existing mulch beds. This was a very special day as we voted on the group's new name - "The StrathOak Planters". Other nominations included Friends of the Brosnan Baths with the motto "Clean enough to swim in" (alluding to the concrete channel), and Friends of Over the Moonee. Thanks again to the Police Community Consultative Committee for cooking up the BBQ, and to Nina and Bob for letting us all lunch in their front garden.



## Starring Vince Aitken

### Planting Day Chef Extraordinaire and TV Celeb!

By now, many of us have had the pleasure of sampling Vince's BBQ fare. There hasn't been an exploded or blackened, or worse an undercooked sausage to come off the hot plate while Vince is in charge. And his veggie burgers are done to perfection. ("mine always seem to crumple" - Elissa). Vince has suggested we start providing dog biscuits at our planting days. It seems Vince's cooking is also appreciated by the many pooches that join in the fun of planting days. You'll be happy to know that doggie treats are now on our shopping list to keep those tail wagers at bay. Some of you may have caught Vince on Channel 7's "Discovery" in September. promoting Rail Trails Australia. The Moonee Ponds Creek Bike path also got a mention. For keen cyclists, there's a book published called "Rail Trails of Victoria and South Australia" available at most book stores (or see [www.railtrails.org.au](http://www.railtrails.org.au)). A new book, Rail Trails of Tasmanian will be coming out by end of this November, Vince assures us.

*And he plants too! In between turning sausages and chatting to everyone Vince finds time to lend a helping hand with the planting .*

## Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek

### Wright Street, Westmeadows

Old hands at planting, the Friends held two planting days this Spring. In August 14 people planted 200 tubestock and 1,200 cells into the beautiful conservation zone. In September 19 people planted 250 plants on the area known affectionately as "the tongue" which was previously a gorse infested area. It's now looking terrific!

*Once again Julie spoils her planting friends with freshly made scones - note the grins of appreciation on Dave and Inara's faces.*



*A discovery day of grassland delights at Strathnaver Reserve - see page 11 for more info on this special site*

## New Group! Friends of Strathnaver Reserve

### Mascoma Street, Strathmore

Inspired by Judy, this long neglected remnant grassland site now has it's own Friends group to care for it. 20 people came along to plant 75 tubestock and undertook plenty of handweeding. As this is a very sensitive site, we hope to develop a management plan before any more planting days go ahead. Judy's keen to hold regular hand weeding days, and we'll definitely have a special Spring wildflower discovery day in 2004. So we'll keep you posted.

## National Tree Day

### Wright Street, Westmeadows

A joint effort between MPCCC, Melbourne Water and Hume City Council, saw a gala event with 100 people helping to plant 2,500 tubestock. Thank you to the Police Community Consultative Committee for cooking up the BBQ, and thanks also to Starbucks for their fabulous ground coffee, which managed to keep us going at many of this Spring's planting days before it sadly ran out.

## Travancore Residents, Delhi Reserve, Travancore

Unfortunately due to a mishap with the letterbox drop, we only had 7 keen people turn up to this new planting site. It was a very beautiful day however, and we successfully planted 200 tubes & 30 Poa cells which was a terrific effort! Good news is, there's plenty more of this newly mulched bed to tackle in 2004! Get Ready.

*Moonee Valley Council's lovely Gabrielle and local resident Roger, beautify Delhi Reserve's mosaic bed*



# ...more spring season success

## Pascoe Vale Residents Bass Street, Pascoe Vale

Bass Street planting days are always intimate and happy gatherings. 6 volunteers helped to plant 310 tubestock and 100 speedlings into the newly mulched mounds created by Melbourne Water. Thanks to Steph, sometimes MPCCC planting staffer, who has agreed to become this group's new contact person.

*Con, Jack, Dave and Matt pose proudly on their newly planted mound. (Thanks also to Bob, Phil and Phyllis who made a quick escape before Elissa remembered to take a photo)*



## New Group! The Boeing Reserve Troopers

August 14<sup>th</sup> launched this new group. Thanks to 14 volunteers 150 tubestock and 200 cells were planted into jute mat, just south of the trestle bridge. Arun's enthusiasm convinced us to hold a second planting day in October where 12 people planted a further 130 tubes and 180 speedlings.

*The Hamilton Puppy Minder—not just for digging holes!*

*Vince and Gabi soldier on - now we know how this group got their name*



## Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Primrose Street Essendon

This was our Grand Finale planting day for MPCCC's Spring Planting season. This is a new, and very challenging site. 22 people managed to scale an 80 degree jute matted slope to plant 224 tubestock. We all looked strangely both muddy and furry after our efforts. We were joined by Frank, Roger, Brett and John from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade who gave the planting site a good soaking. A special "Thank you" goes to Dennis Torpy and his son's for planting 63 tubestock in the Hopetoun section of the creek.



*The prize for the steepest site of the season goes to Primrose Street. However, this slope was no obstacle for these gutsy creek friends.*

Once again - Thank you all for a terrific year. Especially to Natasha, Stephanie and David for helping us run all those weekend plantings. It will all start again in April 2004! If you haven't made it to a planting day yet, join us! Even if physically you're unable to plant, there's lots of other ways to help on the day and it's a great way to meet your neighbors. If you would like to know more, or wish to nominate a site for planting in 2004 please contact Elissa Simmons on 9333 2406 or by email: [info@mpccc.org](mailto:info@mpccc.org)



# royal park wetlands

## the future's looking clear for the Moonee Ponds Creek

Last year we got excited about the \$2.1m wetland development in the Jacana retarding basin, which will treat approximately 200 ha. of run-off from the Broadmeadows area before it reaches the Moonee Ponds Creek. Now the lower reaches of the creek are set to benefit with Melbourne City Council behind a major new wetlands project at Royal Park.

Once an Aboriginal camping ground, Royal Park was proposed for open space by Governor Latrobe in 1854. It is the place where the Burke and Wills expedition departed from in 1860, and was used for the stationing of troops in both the First and Second World Wars. At 188 hectares, Royal Park is the largest park in the City of Melbourne. And what better place for a major inner city wetland?

In 1998 Melbourne City Council prepared The Royal Park Master Plan, which includes the establishment of a native wetland in the low-lying area near Manningham Street using the storm and treated water run-off from the Zoo and the run-off from the wet surface of the State netball and Hockey centre. It is proposed that run-off from the games village will also contribute to the wetlands system.

The wetlands will allow recycling of water for irrigation of Royal park, golf course greens, sports fields and possible re-use by the Zoo while helping to improve the environmental quality of the Moonee

Ponds Creek. It is also intended that the wetlands and water recycling project will provide major new native habitat areas and recreation and educational opportunities.

The wetlands is proposed to be located in the western section of Royal Park and will have two main areas of water: a habitat public recreation area and a storage area. Both water areas will provide native habitat and have surrounding planting and landscaping. The water area to the east of Oak Street and north of the baseball field will contain plants that will remove nutrients from the water derived from the Park Street drain and stormwater from the north. The water area to be located between Oak Street and the City Link freeway will store 'A' Class recycled water. This area will contain approximately 20 megalitres of water.

The recycled water will be used to irrigate the Royal Park Golf Course and adjacent sports fields and parkland within the Commonwealth Games Village being developed

immediately north of the storage pond.

The State government has committed \$5m towards the implementation of the wetlands project and once constructed, the City of Melbourne will manage the wetlands as it manages the rest of Royal Park.

We hope one day wetland developments like this one are common throughout each river catchment, creating habitat and healthy waterways for all.

### Key Project Dates

**Early October 2003**

Planning permit application made for the Wetlands project.

**August/September 2004**

Construction commences

**August/September 2005**

Construction completed

**January 2006**

Official opening of the Royal Park Wetlands

*For more information contact the City of Melbourne Hotline on 9658 9658 or visit [www.melbourne.vic.gov.au](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au)*

# when five mile creek was (almost) five miles long

It's been nearly a century since Five Mile Creek (a tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek) flowed for its entire length (actually, it was only 1.4 miles). The tributary once began just north of Woodlands Park, Essendon (see map below) before it was converted into a concrete pipe in 1929 (From Bulla Rd to Woodlands Park). From 1935 the stretch from Woodlands Park to Pascoe Vale Road was an open earth channel. Now most of the creek is piped underground or channeled, reducing it to approximately 250metres before it flows into the Moonee Ponds Creek. During the 50's and 60's Kim Westcombe - Shared Co-ordinator of the Friends of the Upper Moonee Ponds Creek and her friend Pam Watson had plenty of adventures along the open 'drain' at the end of their street:

"My friend Pam and I grew up living 2 houses away from each other in Woodvale Grove, Essendon. In fact Pam and I went to Essendon Primary School and Strathmore High together back in the 50s and 60s. At the end of our street were paddocks with a "drain" (for want of a better word) which flowed into the Moonee Ponds Creek. In this paddock Pam's horse Flash was agisted.

the creek as a route to wherever they were going. We never thought about retaliation and, if my memory serves me correctly, there was none.

Unfortunately in the 70s the drain was enclosed in concrete piping and the paddock developed into housing therefore destroying the adventure land for the next generation of "drain dwellers".

Today we laugh together about these memories and do our bit to assist with the rejuvenation and restoration of the Banks of the Moonee Ponds Creek so as to perhaps allow the next generation of "drain dwellers" to use their imagination and experience the adventures that we enjoyed."

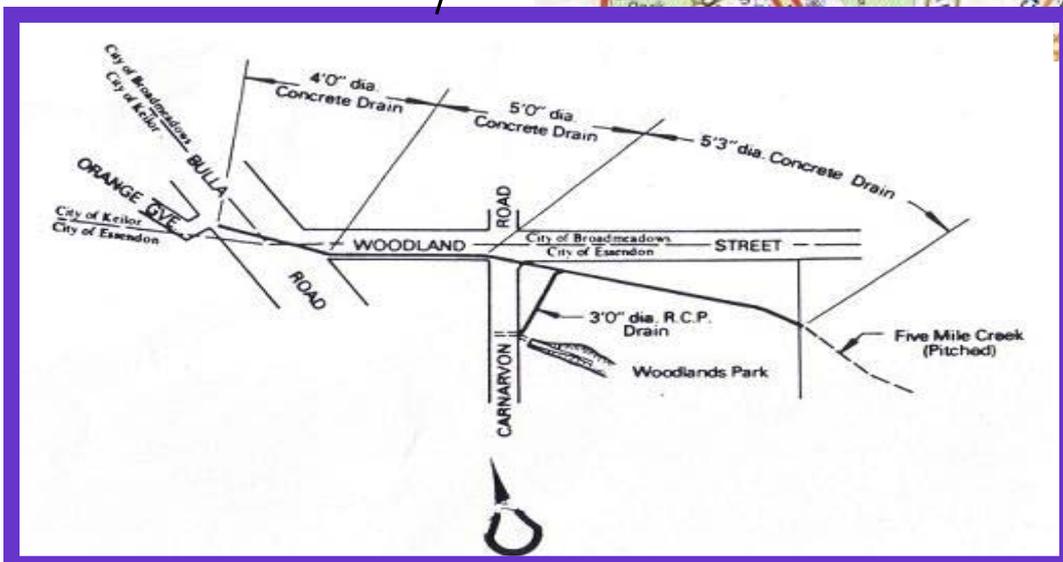
Our imaginations worked overtime in that paddock. We had lots of adventures and always maintained a strong vigilance not to allow anyone else near our adventure land. Our main weapon for any "enemies" who attempted to enter the paddock via the drain was to pick up Flash's droppings (horse manure) and throw it at the intruders. We had great fun sitting up in the trees firing our ammunition at these poor innocent people who were just using



Kim and Pam's old street

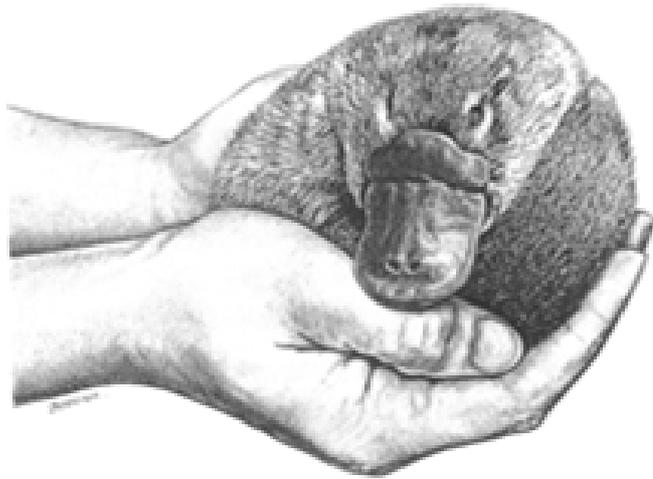
Where the Five Mile Creek flowed before 1935

Melways map 28-Edn. 29 (2002)



This map was produced in 1929 in preparation for the conversion of Five Mile Creek into a concrete drain from Bulla Road to Woodlands Park

Source : 'The Development of the MPC Drainage System'-MMBW 1989



people like us

# Platypus Care

## looking out for platypus

**a** long with being one of Australia's best-loved animals, the platypus is also one of the most difficult to survey and monitor. If you've ever seen a platypus in the wild, you can make a valuable contribution to platypus conservation by sharing the details of your sighting with a new community-based program, *Platypus Care*.

The platypus requires a lot of food to support its active and aquatic lifestyle, mainly in the form of small freshwater creatures such as insects, yabbies and worms. To avoid losing condition, a female platypus with two rapidly growing youngsters needs to consume al-

most the equivalent of her own body weight in prey each day! Accordingly, platypus numbers are usually closely linked to waterway health. By collecting platypus sightings from many different locations, *Platypus Care* aims to help identify where the animals are still abundant and where they may have disappeared, so appropriate conservation action can be undertaken.

*Platypus Care* is co-ordinated by the Australian Platypus Conservancy (a non-government organisation based at Toorourrong Reservoir Park near Whittlesea), and funded by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and

Environment, the Victorian Catchment Management Authorities, and Melbourne Water. While the program's main focus is on Victorian streams and rivers, sightings made in other parts of the platypus's range are also very welcome. As well, details of both recent and past sightings are needed to establish how platypus numbers have changed in living memory.

People wishing to contribute information to *Platypus Care* can pick up a standard reporting form/brochure from DSE Information Centres, Melbourne Water offices, or public libraries. To protect people's privacy and ensure that platypus populations are not disturbed, specific locality details that are shared with the sightings database will remain confidential. The details of platypus sightings can also be registered online by visiting the Platypus Care website [www.platypus.asn.au](http://www.platypus.asn.au).

On behalf of platypus, many thanks for any help you can provide!

*Melody Serena*

Australian Platypus Conservancy



*"a female platypus ... needs to consume almost the equivalent of her own body weight in prey each day!"*



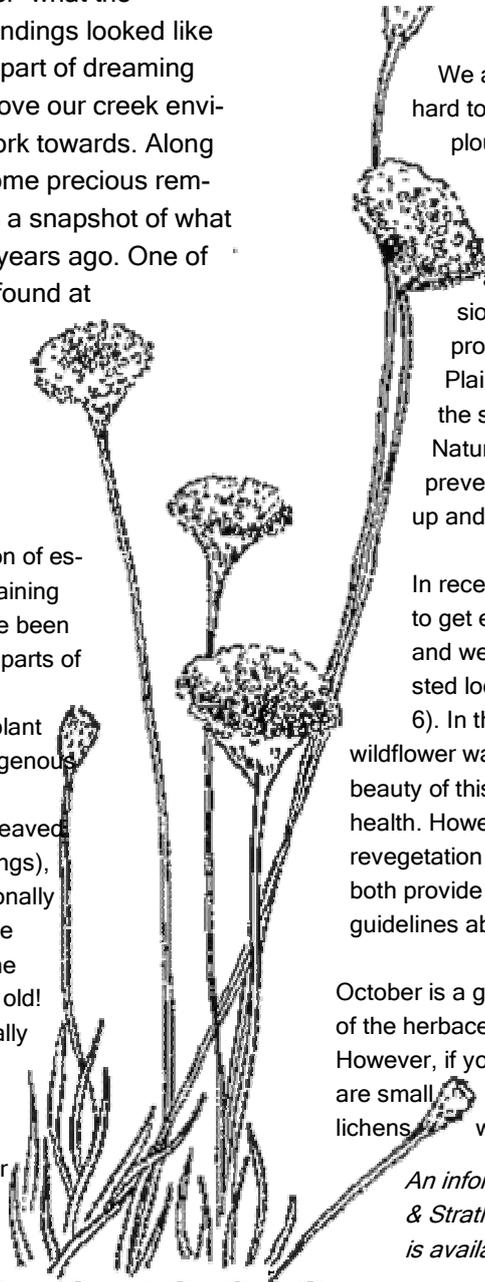
# Strathnaver grasslands

## where have all the pretties gone?

Many people often ponder what the Moonee Ponds Creek and surroundings looked like prior to European settlement. It's part of dreaming about ways in which we can improve our creek environment and create a vision to work towards. Along the creek we are lucky to have some precious remnants of vegetation which give us a snapshot of what it may have looked like over 200 years ago. One of those precious remnants can be found at Strathnaver Reserve, just off Mascoma Street in Strathmore.

### So what's so special about Strathnaver?

Well, it contains a good representation of escarpment grassland vegetation, containing many plant species which would have been common along the creek and across parts of western Victoria. In fact, Strathnaver grasslands are incredibly diverse in plant species, with over 28 herb and 6 indigenous grass species recorded for the site. Included in these are the rare Small leaved Eutaxia (recently featured in Ponderings), many small flowering herbs and regionally rare mosses & lichens. These delicate lichens are found on the Silcrete stone outcrops and may be over 100 years old! The Silcrete outcrops are also culturally significant as they were used as a source of stone material by local Wurundjeri. Silcrete is rich in silica, making it hard & brittle and perfect for making flaked stone tools.



### So why is it all still there?

We are lucky that Strathnaver occurs on a site which is hard to mow, & which was probably never grazed or ploughed, due to the rocky and sometimes steep terrain. This means that many of the delicate species which are sensitive to disturbance have survived for all these years. Despite this, there are still threats to this precious site, with weed invasion being the primary concern. Work started on protecting the grasslands in 1992, with the Keilor Plains SGAP initially raising awareness of the values of the site. They were joined by the Pascoe Vale Field Naturalists and the former City of Essendon. Bollards to prevent mowing were installed, informative signage went up and some initial weed control and planting occurred.

In recent years activity on the site has stalled, but it's time to get excited again. This spring, we held a small planting and weeding day at Strathnaver, attended by many interested local residents & friends from further away (see page 6). In the future, we plan to hold more activities such as wildflower walks and weeding days to raise awareness of the beauty of this site and to actively manage the threats to its health. However, before we go ahead with more intensive revegetation efforts, we need a management plan which will both provide a long term vision for the area and provide detailed guidelines about the best way to achieve this.

October is a good time to visit Strathnaver grasslands, as many of the herbaceous species will be flowering at this time of year. However, if you visit, please tread carefully; many of the plants are small & sensitive to trampling, especially the mosses & lichens which are extremely slow growing.

*An informative small guide for the area (Guide 4, Napier & Strathnaver of the "Yarra Corridor Eco-Tourism Guide") is available from Moonee Valley City Council.*

## upcoming events

### Chafey night at Woodlands

Find out a bit of the history of Woodlands Historic Park at the highly atmospheric (even spooky) theatre nights held by the Friends of Woodlands Historic Park Interpretation Team. The next night is Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November in the evening. For more information call Sue Wright on 0414 526 407 or visit the website at [www.vp-it.com.au/woodlands](http://www.vp-it.com.au/woodlands)

### The Wonderful World of Weeds

Finally, the long promised weed walk is underway. Explore the confluence of the Merri Creek and the Yarra to identify and learn about the medicinal values of some common environmental weeds. Join us on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> of November at Dights Falls car park (Mel Ref: 44 F3) at 2pm—it's free!

### Christmas Party Get your glad rags on !

Unbelievably, it is almost time for our second Christmas BBQ. Join together with other creek friends to celebrate our second year at the depot. Book in Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> December from 4.30pm onwards. Tasty treats & beverages will be provided.

### Moonee Valley Environment Forum

What exactly is the Greenhouse Effect? How can you reduce it through energy auditing and energy efficient appliances? Find out at the next Moonee Valley Environment Forum. Monday 10 November at 7-9pm Civic Area 9 Kellaway Ave Moonee Ponds

# indigenous plant star of the season

## Small-leaved Clematis ...A Bush Delicacy

Clematis microphylla is one of those indigenous species that looks deceptively delicate but in actual fact, may often act as a rampant thug (in the most appropriate circumstances, of course). It has the most appealing habit of smothering dead Boxthorn bushes - turning a sows ear into a silk purse. It can also look most fetching draped over Gold Dust Wattle, creating a striking combination of white stars combined with the bright yellow wattle flowers. It also has a lovely subtle scent which perfumes the air early in the morning (or if you bury your head in a clump & inhale deeply). An incredibly tough little climber, it is very drought resistant once established. It has thick fibrous roots which were actually used as a

food source by Aboriginal people. They cooked the roots first & then kneaded them into an edible dough\*. This climbing plant may either sprawl on the ground or climb up a couple of metres onto any support that is available. The thin wiry stems are covered in small divided leaves. In late Winter to early Spring the plant is absolutely covered in small creamy white star shaped flowers. An added bonus is the feathery seed heads which follow flowering and may persist on the plant until Christmas time. It is happy in full sun and seems not to mind some light shade. \* a great book on traditional Aboriginal food & healing plants is "Koorie Plants Koorie People" by Nelly Zola & Beth Gott, the Koorie Heritage Trust.



*Clematis microphylla*

# spring sightings



*Superb Fairy Wren*



*Fan-tailed Cuckoo*

It's all birds birds birds again this season, I guess they're the most common or obvious form of wildlife down at our creek. We've had many exciting sightings this season, many by our now seasoned staff spotters at the depot. Our most favorite visitor lately has been the Fantail Cuckoo (pictured), spotted by Kelvin Thompson at our Friends get-together in early August. This little beauty has been regaling us with it's evening bird-song, described as a 'mournful descending trill', all through September. We reckon it was calling for a mate; hopefully it met true love as we haven't heard it much lately. We are also lucky enough to be able to watch the progress of a nesting Magpie in one of the Red Gums on our drive into work. Our resident twitcher Nicolette has also spotted Mistletoe Birds and the Black Faced Cuckoo Shrike (pictured) on the way into work. Another goofy bird we have seen lately is the Pallid Cuckoo (pictured), easily spotted by it's haphazard flight. There have been many sightings by the Friends of Jacana Wetlands, proving that this new development is much more than just a retarding basin. Sightings include the very pretty Blue Fairy Wren, flocks of Red Browed Firetails, Black Fronted Dotterels, Hardhead Ducks, Chestnut Teals, Wood Ducks, Fairy Martins, little Grebes and four Black Swans who really made our day at the second spring planting. Thanks to Andrew from FO Jacana Wetlands for all those sightings!

*Please let us know about any sightings you may see along the Moonee Ponds Creek, however big or small. Such information is very important in contributing to the big picture about what's happening along the creek. You can phone, post or email to [info@mpccc.org](mailto:info@mpccc.org).*



*Pallid Cuckoo*



*Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike*