



Ponderings

SEASONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF MOONEE PONDS CREEK

SUMMER 2018 | ISSUE 61

advocate educate interpret participate rehabilitate revegetate

Season's Greetings • Season's Greetings

Season's Greetings



And **many thanks** for the contributions made during 2018:

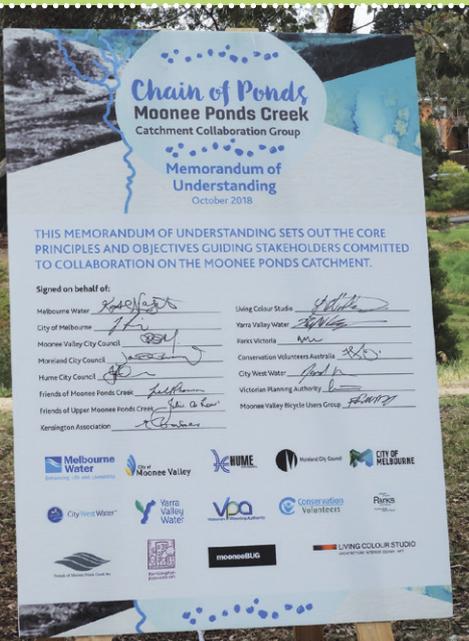
- To the many volunteers participating in plantings and clean-up days – thank you.
- To the Council officers who facilitate our Calendar Events – thank you.
- To Melbourne Water continuing a fine partnership – thank you.
- To individuals who have contributed their images and words to Ponderings and Facebook – thank you.
- To those who wrote submissions and made presentations at Planning Panels – thank you.

Together we have built on the commitment to our Moonee Ponds Creek and its tributaries. Two significant steps have been taken on the way ahead: the adoption of the Chain of Ponds Plan by Moonee Valley and Moreland Councils and the signing of the Chain of Ponds Memorandum of Understanding - a landmark occasion being the culmination of many meetings, strategic planning and site visits. We welcome the appointment of Lori Arthur as the Moonee Ponds Creek Collaboration Lead and look forward to ambitious and exiting outcomes. Implementation of Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways Strategy and Rivers of the West are good news for the Moonee Ponds Creek's future too.

Season's Greetings • Season's Greetings



A Memorandum of Understanding



Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek President Kelvin Thomson's smile said it all as 15 organisations came together to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in a delightful ceremony at J P Fawkner Reserve in Oak Park on October 24th.

The signing was the culmination of 2 years of meetings and site visits for the Chain of Ponds Moonee Ponds Creek Catchment Collaboration Group. The agreement outlines a shared vision "to transform the Moonee Ponds Creek into an iconic Melbourne waterway that provides high social and environmental benefits".

Kelvin's presidential address on the day has been posted in files on Facebook and will be placed on the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Website.

Lori Arthur to co-ordinate first year of the recently launched Chain of Ponds Moonee Ponds Creek Catchment Collaboration

by Tony Smith

It would be hard to imagine a better start to the new umbrella organisation for the Moonee Ponds Creek catchment. Lori Arthur replaced Sam Neidra as the City of Moreland natural resource officer responsible for the Creek in 2010. At the time we thought Sam would be a hard act to follow but those thoughts quickly faded as Lori's calm presence and expertise more than kept the show on the road. Moreland had long been the strongest supporter of a co-ordinated whole-of-catchment approach, presumably because that approach worked well on the Merri Creek, so this was particularly important.



The new Collaboration structure is the product of the Moonee Ponds Creek Catchment collaboration process and workshops which took place over the past two years, initiated by Melbourne Water.

Significant plans provided the impetus for developing a whole-of-catchment approach. These included the Chain of Ponds Plan, developed by the Moonee Valley Council and joined by Moreland Council; as well as Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways Strategy. Strategic planning by the City of Melbourne and Victorian Planning Authority to address flood management in regard to the development of the urban renewal areas along the lower Moonee Ponds Creek is nearing completion.

Julie Francis headed up the collaboration process culminating with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by 17 partner organisations. Her move to Hume Council sees a consolidation of the commitment of all four 'Creek' councils to the Collaboration together with government, Melbourne Water and other agencies. Already five projects are under consideration implementing the Collaboration's aim to "transform the Moonee Ponds Creek into an iconic waterway for Melbourne that provides high social and environmental benefits".

Lori has put together a newsletter detailing the way ahead for the Collaboration. It is available on our Facebook page in Files and will be placed on our Website.



Collaboration partners at the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding

Moonee Moonee Chain of Ponds

by Anna Lanigan

Feel blessed to have attended a free talk at the Substation by Marita Dyson and Stuart Flanagan who make up the stunning duo known as the *Orbweavers*. They had performed to sell out audiences during the week and the talk took us on their journey of discovery of the changes over time from pre-settlement to today of the West Melbourne environment from pristine seasonal waterways to industrial degradation to a reclamation fightback. An inspirational journey illustrated by their own and historic

images and exquisite evocative songs with “Moonee Moonee Chain of Ponds” still resonating in my head. This beautiful experience adds to a growing body of work that has been inspired by the Moonee Ponds Creek. Enough to fill an exhibition.

Marita and Stuart plan to make their songs freely available. They have a website:

<https://www.theorbweavers.com/>

Moonee Moonee Chain of Ponds

*With your reeds and your black swans
this is The Railway.*

*I've come to carve your circles straight
I've come to bring your edges parallel
and there: a ribbon of blue you'll be
to carry the coal that feeds me
Will you give way?*

Moonee Moonee Chain of Ponds

*You know the city cannot wait,
you know the swamp will soon be drained,
you know the sky will turn to road,
and yet you still resist.
(Do not give way)*



MOONEE VALLEY

Update

● ● ● **Nhanbu Gurru Festival**

An Ancient Flower Festival held in October at Five Mile Creek's Babepal Paen-mirring ceremonial rock circle attracted a large enthusiastic gathering.

Wurundjeri culture was celebrated with a smoking ceremony led by Uncle David Warren, talks with Wurundjeri elders, traditional dancing by the Djirri Djirri Dance

Group and music, and a bush BBQ with kangaroo and emu tastings.

Children's activities included bush crafts and Murnong (yam daisy) plants were potted up in readiness for the next

planting season. The sun shone down on this beautiful setting for a perfect day.



Nursery Corner Master Plan Consultation



In October, locals and Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek attended an information session at Nursery Corner, Strathmore hosted by Moonee Valley City Council. Ideas were sought from the community and a wish-list created. MVCC will take the suggestions into the next stage of developing a draft plan for the site. Changes are also planned for the Men's Shed to accommodate the Essendon Gem and Lapidary Club forced to move from their rooms following the development of Cross Keys Reserve.

The massive task of clearing the site will soon commence. It's anticipated that the old Nursery buildings will be demolished and removed along with tonnes of debris left behind by previous tenants. The Master Plan documents will go out for public consultation in 2019.

Down the Drain - Lost tributaries of the MPC

By David Widdowson

Part One - Introduction

Despair as we might about the concrete-lined drain that is the current Moonee Ponds Creek, at least it is still above ground, which is more than can be said for many of the minor creeks that once flowed into it. These minor creeks have been reduced, in the most part, to underground storm water drains. In this series I will look at four of these creeks; Melville Creek in Brunswick, Five Mile Creek in Essendon, Westbreen Creek in Pascoe Vale and the Creek that ran down Pascoe Vale Road in Oak Park, now the Chapman Main Drain.

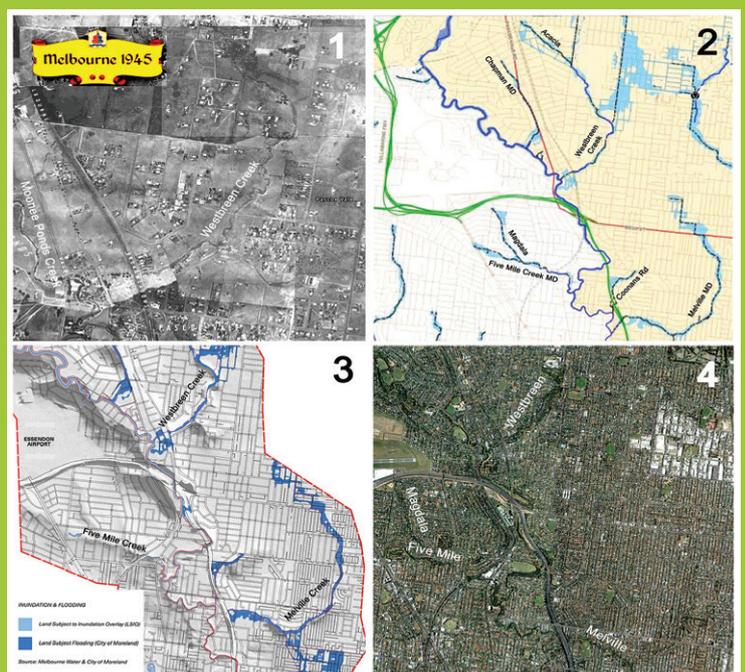
So, why were these minor creeks turned into underground drains? Partly it was to create land for housing (eg Five Mile Creek east of Napier Street, Melville creek near Moreland Road). But then again many of the old creek beds were turned into reserves or green corridors (e.g. Salmon Reserve and the reserve above the Magdala main drain, Austin Crescent and Dunstan Reserves). Presumably this was because of subsidence risk, and also that such properties would lie at the bottom of valleys and hence be prone to flooding. Safety may have been a factor, there is a story about a drunk drowning in Five Mile Creek one night on the way home from the pub! But mainly I'd say it was the 19th and mid-20th century mentality about "tidying up" urban areas. After the suburbs were cleared, these creeks were left as dirt-lined drains, at risk of major erosion after heavy rain. There certainly wasn't the attraction we feel now towards green spaces and water; there was no attempt to beautify these creeks - better just to shove them underground!

Next time: **Melville Creek.**

Drain Spotting

The following images show how we can get some idea of where these creeks once flowed:

- 1) From aerial photos such as those found on the Melbourne 1945 website, here showing Westbreen Creek before it was put underground. (<https://www.1945.melbourne>)
- 2) From maps showing where the main drains (MD) currently run. (Source: SES/ Moreland Council).
- 3) From flood maps and topographical maps, the creeks lay in the lowest part of the landscape. (Source: Chain of Ponds)
- 4) From vegetation on Google Maps; trees and bushes grow very well in old creek beds! (Courtesy Google Earth).



Have information? Contact: DavidWiddowson20@gmail.com

Birdata

Birdata is the new portal collecting data for bird conservation. Birdata was formerly the online tool for entering data into the Atlas of Australian Birds. In 2016, Birdata was redesigned and expanded to accept data from the Atlas project as well as from various dedicated monitoring projects (e.g. Melbourne Water Regional Bird Monitoring Project or MWRbm and Birds in Backyards) and non-BirdLife Australia projects. It is a convenient/efficient way of contributing data to these programs.

Birdata has two components through which data are entered: an app for a mobile phone or tablet; and the new web portal. The app facilitates simple data entry using mobile devices and provides basic reporting functionality. The app determines a user's survey location anywhere in Australia. Species photographs can be uploaded with data to assist documenting records.

The new Birdata web portal has enhanced reporting and data management functionality. A user's existing data are stored in the 'My Data' section of the portal, to which the user has access. A user can view year and site lists, generate species maps and download data in the portal. Within 'My Data', summaries for each survey can be viewed, while an 'Edit' button enables information to be included or altered (e.g. location, date, time, species, counts, etc.).

Birdata is one of BirdLife Australia's greatest resources. Data submitted will be used for various conservation purposes, including State of Australia's Birds reporting, Threatened Species Listings, Key Biodiversity Areas,

Environmental Impact Assessments and research by students and Atlassers.

Anyone is welcome to sign-up and contribute to Birdata. New users can click on the 'Sign Up' button in the Birdata homepage <http://birdata.birdlife.org.au/>. Observers accustomed to Atlas paper forms or the original Birdata, will need to create a new login. Existing data will be moved to their login once the observer details and new login have been matched. Questions can be answered by contacting the Birdata team – (03) 9347 0757, email: birdata@birdlife.org.au

BirdLife Australia is currently recruiting volunteers to continue the MWRbm. In its seventh year (2018-2019) of the project, data collected from across 240 sites feed back into on-ground management of these sites and the broader regional goals of Melbourne Water. Birds have been identified as an ongoing indicator of catchment health. Melbourne Water has developed bird metrics to assess the health of catchments and waterways. Monitoring data collected by volunteers feed directly into the metrics and ultimately into Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways Strategy.

Moonee Ponds Creek includes a number of MWRbm sites and new recruits are needed to provide some younger legs to keep up the good work. Sites where volunteers are required include Wright Street (the Tarnuk) and Willowbrook Reserve upstream of Mickleham Road, the Jacana Wetlands and Westbreen Creek.

BirdLife Australia's Birdata Manager - **Andrew Silcocks**.

BirdLife Australia's Melbourne Water Regional Bird Monitoring Project Officer – **Darren Quin**.



Did you know?

That students from Oak Park Primary School are monitoring frogs in the pond at the Herbert St Living Stream Project using the Melbourne Water Frog Census Phone App. Anna used her phone to locate their recording on the App's interactive map and had a listen and it was a "hang on a minute...what was that!!!" moment. Among the usual suspects was what she thought was a Victorian Smooth Froglet. A few emails later her ID was confirmed and the children were congratulated on recording a species that had rarely been documented in our catchment. James Frazer of Frogwatch wrote "within a 10km radius we only have 9 records. Other than one 2016 record, all others date from 2007-2008. In the Moonee Ponds catchment we only have 1 record of the species". How about that! Citizen Science at its best. We add our congratulations to the

Oak Park Primary School students and their Sustainability Officer, John Hughes.

<https://www.frogid.net.au/learn/geocrinia-victoriana>



The pond plantings have been a huge success providing outstanding habitat

Happenings on the

MORELAND

News

Moonee Ponds Creek in Moreland

Morelands Natural Resource Management Officer, Lori Arthur, has taken on a secondment at Melbourne Water for 12 months as the Chain of Ponds Collaboration Lead. This role is focussed on supporting better cohesion and collaboration between the many agencies and community groups with interest and responsibilities in managing the Moonee Ponds Creek and on advocating for improvements such as naturalisation and enhanced community access.

Vince Andreana (pictured) will once again be looking after the creek in the Moreland area. Vince is no stranger to the creek having grown up in Pascoe Vale and also filled in the position whilst Lori was twice on maternity leave in recent years.

As mentioned in previous Ponderings, Council has been developing a Conservation and Development Plan for the Westbreen Creek. The plan seeks to protect and enhance existing environmental and heritage values while planning park and amenity upgrades to improve public access and enjoyment of the open space. A draft plan will be available for public comment from December 12th to 5pm January 28th 2019 on Councils website and information sessions will be held on site at Gavin Park playground on Saturday 19th January 9:30-11:30am and Thursday 26th January

4:00-6:00pm for the community to learn more about the proposed works. www.moreland.vic.gov.au/about-us/projects/park-playground-and-creek-projects/westbreen-creek-conservation-and-development-plan

Up in Gowanbrae, people may have noticed the train of shipping containers has been removed and the area is now in the process of being rehabilitated. This will involve regrading of soil mounding to create access tracks and

mowable surfaces, reseeding and revegetation in various areas.

Denzil Don Reserve in Victoria Street in Brunswick West is next on the list for capital improvements. Works will focus on upgrading the existing playground but opportunities to improve the interface with the creek will also be explored. The project is currently in the design phase and there will be opportunities for community feedback on the design in the new year with construction due to be completed by June 2019.

www.moreland.vic.gov.au/events-recreation/parks-and-trails/find-a-park/denzil-don-reserve/

Site preparation has begun at a number of sites for planting in 2019. Look out for details of community planting events in Moreland in the Autumn edition of *Ponderings*.



Image courtesy: Mancell Cornish

Moreland DELWP grant

The Collaboration group have received \$400,000 from DELWP to open up and activate a new park on the Moonee Ponds Creek behind Moreland Road with an improved ford crossing to Vanberg Road in Essendon. The plan is to construct an informal path, improve the accessibility of the ford crossing, undertake weed removal and revegetation as well as install some basic picnic facilities.



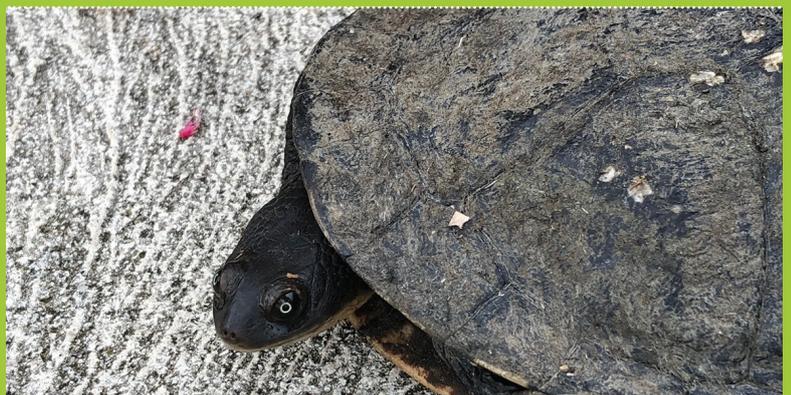
Royal Park Billabong by Kaye Oddie

Royal Park's Billabong is a little known small water body in the SW of the park, near Flemington Road. It is on a drainage line that is part of the wider Moonee Ponds Creek catchment. The Billabong has recently been upgraded to enhance its WSUD and its ecological functionality. Originally designed and constructed by landscape architect Gordon Ford in 1989, it has now had a new lining, upgrade of its hydrology and new pond vegetation. Already Eastern Common Froglets are calling and ducks are enjoying the more permanent water in the pond. This welcome project was undertaken by the Melbourne City Council and overseen by Ralf Pfleiderer, Water Sensitive Urban Design Co-ordinator, Urban Sustainability Branch.



Eastern Long-necked turtle an unusual visitor

The Jellie family found an Eastern Long-necked Turtle on the footpath in front of their house and even though their street backs on to the creek, it was still a surprise especially as it is a concrete section. It was a great lesson for young Jack who helped in the rescue and return to the creek. Of course we could speculate it had come to visit Jack's brand new little sister, Matilda, and we warmly welcome our newest Committee member.



Tawny Tales



Nest-watch took on a new meaning as Bird Counts along the Moonee Ponds Creek and tributaries revealed 5 pairs of nesting Tawny Frogmouth families. Often hard to spot the task was made easier as four of the five pairs returned to nesting sites used last season a wonderful indication they are settling into the Moonee Ponds Creek environment.



Salmon Reserve Essendon



Westbreen Creek Pascoe Vale



Nursery Corner Strathmore



John Pascoe Fawkner Reserve Oak Park



Boeing Reserve Strathmore Heights

Want to be a sustainability champion?

MOONEE VALLEY

News

Moonee Valley City Council are looking for people who want to make a difference in their community. Get the tools to develop local environmental projects - for free.

- Meet like minded people.
- Attend field trips and community events.
- Receive 10 weeks of free training in leadership, communications, project delivery and more.
- Ongoing project support.
- Starting May 2019

This is great program for those wanting to make a difference but not sure where to start. Whether you are interested in gardening, waste reduction, energy saving or anything else about sustainable living, this program is for you.

Visit: mvcc.vic.gov.au/champions or email: environment@mvcc.vic.gov.au for an application form.

Applications close **22 February 2019**.

Creeky Links



Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek: mooneepondscreek.org.au
[facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek](https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek)

Friends of Merri Creek: friendsofmerricreek.org.au/

Friends of Edgars Creek: foec.org.au

Friends of Steele Creek: [facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekInc](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekInc)

Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley: fmvonline.com

Bowerbird discussion website: bowerbird.org.au/projects/5249

Woodlands Historic Park: whp.altervista.org/

The Werribee River Association: werribeeriver.org.au

Contact us if you have any other links to share

Creek Watch



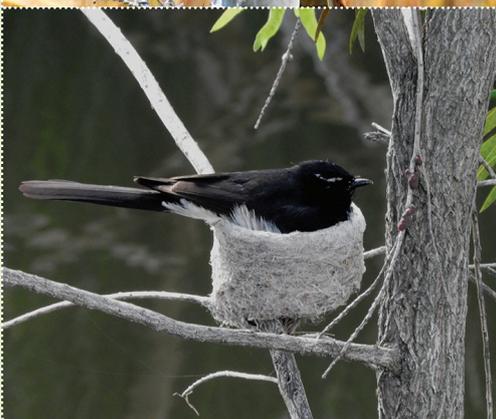
Please help by reporting rapid change of water levels or water discolouration along the creek:

- High water flows coming out of drains during a period of no rain could indicate a leaking water main or underground burst pipe. To report this, contact **Yarra Valley Water** for the east side of the bank and **City West Water** for the west side of the bank.
- If the creek water is yellow or white or otherwise discoloured, this could indicate trade waste being dumped in the creek. This needs to be **urgently reported to the EPA**.

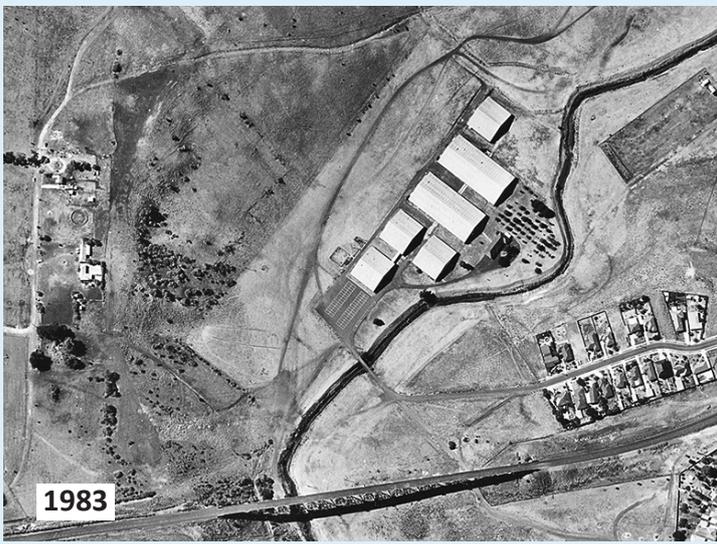
Sightings



Dennis Hocking continues to add to his great finds at the Jacana Wetlands. Australian Pelicans are an uncommon sight there and the Juvenile Goshawk, Male and Female Golden-headed Cisticola along with a White-Winged Triller are impressive finds. The Wedge-tail Eagle fledglings were spotted in Woodlands Historic Park, very much part of the MPC catchment. Anna was excited to catch up with the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos at Jacana, found Willie-wagtails and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos nesting at Westmeadows and Eastern Rosellas continue to be sighted along the Creek.



Ponderings
welcome photos and
written contributions
from our readers. Please
send contributions to:
fompc.ponderings@gmail.com



Outlook Drive Glenroy

Reminiscing with Maurice

This image of Outlook Drive, Glenroy, was taken on the 30 January 1983 and is a crop of a much larger print taken by VicMap during an aerial survey run. The large building in the image on the site of present day Gowanbrae is R.K Morgan’s Engineering. The footbridge we now know over the Creek was then an access road to the factory. When Morgan’s shut down the building had a second life as a Sports Stadium housing indoor basketball before finally being demolished to make way for the Gowanbrae subdivision.

Anna Lanigan continues... Across the Moonee Ponds Creek in Glenroy the 1983 image shows newly constructed homes coming to an abrupt end and allotments 1-33 Outlook Drive remaining vacant. By default the vacant land came under the ownership of VicTrack. Despite a former “win” in 2009 that had the land gifted to the public, in March 2018 the vacant land in Outlook Drive was deemed surplus-to-need and placed on the market for development. This resulted in a call to arms for residents and Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek to rally and rail against the sale.



Finally Celebrating with a letter from Moreland’s Councillor John Kavanagh

“I am thrilled to inform you that we have been successful in purchasing the entire parcel of Outlook Drive land!!!

The section of the land that is currently zoned residential will be rezoned so that this land will be open space forever!

I called a Special Council Meeting last week where we resolved to increase our offer – this land has not come cheap!

I know that ‘success has many fathers and failure is an orphan’ and so many will claim success in this. I tell you as clearly as I

can that the success is because of the efforts of your elected Councillors, our CEO (Nerina Di Lorenzo), Kelvin Thomson, Kaye Oddie [and Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek], Peter Khalil and you the community more generally.

As thrilled as I am, I still think it is wrong that such a large sum of ratepayers money had to be used to buy land from another level of government. This has not been gifted in any way.”

The purchase price remains undisclosed.

Essendon North Kinder went up the Moonee Ponds Creek

Children at the Essendon North Kindergarten and some parents were treated to the delights of the Moonee Ponds Creek at Boeing Reserve recently. Teacher Cathy Hingley arranged for members of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek to give an overview of the creek and the creatures that live there. Carolyn Layton and Greg Hunt, told a little of the pre-European history of the region, shared photos and stories of some of the frogs, birds and other animals that live in and along it and pointed out some of the many ways in which the locals care for our Creek. But the best bit was the delight that the children showed when they got to scoop up and look closely at the water bugs collected earlier from the creek. It was just magic to see the excitement on their faces as they found the pond-life that the frogs and birds feed on.



Movements up and down the Creek

by Kaye Oddie

There have been several recent changes in council and Melbourne Water officers working along the Creek corridor - here is an update:

Hume Council

New appointment - Julie Francis,
Coordinator Open Space & Recreation Planning.
Email: JulieF@hume.vic.gov.au

Moonee Ponds Creek Collaboration Group

Lori Arthur, has been seconded from Moreland Council to Moonee Ponds Creek Collaboration Lead, based at Melbourne Water.
Email: lori.arthur@melbournewater.com.au

Moonee Valley Council

Acting Conservation Officer whilst Michelle Gooding is on long service leave is Milly Burke.
Email Milly: MBurke@mvcc.vic.gov.au

Moreland Council

Vince Andreana is now full time Natural Resource Management Officer,
email: VAndreana@moreland.vic.gov.au

Melbourne Water

Zoe Samson, formerly a Melbourne Water Waterways & Land officer along the Creek has been seconded for 12 months as Project Manager, Kalkallo, Innovation & Business Development, so we will miss her during the year.

Email: Zoe.Samson@melbournewater.com.au

Paul Hodgson is the new Waterways and Land Officer for Melbourne Water for the Moreland side of the Creek.

Email: Paul.Hodgson@melbournewater.com.au

We wish everyone well in their new positions. It is pleasing to note that the Moonee Ponds Creek will still benefit from their continuing expertise.

Come along and celebrate with the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek

- A new year of activities
- Victory at Outlook Drive

Saturday 9 February at 12 midday
at the Rotunda and BarBQ

Adelaide Dve Gowanbrae (Melway 16 C3)
BYO lunch and drinks (and chairs)



facebook



Join our "Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek" Facebook Group to keep up with planting dates, events and creek news.

*Join the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek for **\$20** per year*

Help preserve and improve the Moonee Ponds creek's natural environment.

For information and to join, go to: mooneepondscreek.org.au/join-us/ and complete the membership form or write to: **PO Box 54, Essendon Victoria. 3040.**

The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek supports child safe environments for its activities.



News

from the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek

Bimonthly meetings

Held the following dates at the Sam Merrifield Library,
762 Mt. Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds
commencing at 6:30pm.

2019 meeting dates:

18 February • 15 April • 17 June • 19 August • 21 October • 16 December