

# Ponderings

Autumn 2010

Issue 29

Seasonal Newsletter of the Moonee Ponds Creek  
Coordination Committee Inc

advocate

educate

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate

## Clean Up Australia Day

### *The rain didn't deter us!*

They called it a 'Once in 100 year event' to describe the storm Melbourne suffered on the Saturday afternoon before Clean Up Australia Day. The creek was a rushing torrent, and leaves stripped from the trees littered the streets and parks.

Sunday started with drizzle and the threat of more storms to come, but that didn't stop 107 wonderful volunteers signing on to Clean Up Australia Day at the CityLink Neighbourhood Connections (CNC) site at Debney Meadows Primary School!

### *A wonderful mix of people*

A diverse range of groups came together with parents, students and teachers from the Debney Meadows Primary School. There were 17 different organisations (the logos tell the story) who came along to help – what fantastic support!

Volunteers set off in groups lead by LHMU volunteers to clean Debney Park and along the Moonee Ponds Creek. The creek was still a torrent from the storm and a lot of litter had been washed into the litter traps. When it is safe, all that litter will be cleaned out of the traps.

Over 95 bags were filled and other rubbish collected from the local area, which was about the same as last year.

What a great effort !!!!! for the 4<sup>th</sup> CityLink Neighbourhood Connections Clean Up with the local Community.

The Moonee Ponds Creek and Port Phillip Bay Thank You.

## What's in this edition?

- ➔ Autumn Planting Calendar
- ➔ Clean Up Australia Day events
- ➔ Future directions for the MPCCC
- ➔ Plan progress
- ➔ What's been happening along the creek
- ➔ Exciting Sightings



Photographs by eye4photograhpy.com.au



The Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee gratefully acknowledges the support of these councils



# Future directions for the MPCCC

## What role now for the MPCCC?

It is now more than a year since the MPCCC ceased employing staff, and vacated the Parks Victoria premises at Woodlands which had served as our home.

So what of the future direction and structure of the MPCCC?

That question has been mostly on the back burner while we commissioned and awaited the new Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan is intended to provide a vision for the length of Creek and to serve as a key component of future proposals for funding works on the Creek.

The submissions received following the release of the first draft of the Strategic Plan highlighted for me a key role for a reinvigorated MPCCC, that of capturing, maintaining and making accessible a lot of the personal knowledge and information inside the heads (and the photo collections) of those of us with a personal interest in the Creek

## Learning from the past

Even beyond the sixty years personal knowledge of the Creek that I can draw on, I also have inherited my mother's sensitivity to the importance of local histories and would hope some of that rubs off on whatever future we can give the MPCCC.

Reviewing the draft Strategic Plan led me to the University of Melbourne's collection of old maps going back to when the Creek drained into a chain of ponds and swamps south of Flemington Bridge. That history of how the Creek has been constructed and reconstructed needs to inform our hopes for its future.

## MPCCC information conduit – building communities

The MPCCC was originally set up as a partnership between what is now the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek and the four municipalities the Creek runs between. It operated that way for a decade before changes in social expectations led to local governments taking responsibility for some of the work that the MPCCC was doing.

One very important role the MPCCC was undertaking, was liaison with the, at last count, 14 local friends groups which have sprung up, mostly during the past decade, to care for their respective stretches of creek. While individual councils can now handle much of that liaison, they have boundaries which don't always fit with the geography of the local groups and certainly not with supporting the vitalising trickle of characters who have spread more than greening through their travels to plantings up and down the creek.

## Need other sources of funding

The MPCCC is an incorporated association with defined purposes, membership and rules. What it no longer has, is a guarantee from the member councils of forward funding for a Co-ordinator and other core expenses. However, it has charitable tax deduction status and is clearly eligible for, and has in the past been awarded, many grants. If the MPCCC is to continue to operate, it will need to re-establish sufficient core funding to support even a volunteer-based operation before looking for specific project grants.

## Tough decisions ahead

The May meeting of the MPCCC will initiate a process of determining what to do with the MPCCC's incorporated structure. I'm hoping we will have an in-principle agreement to a course of action by our August meeting and have any formal amendments that may be needed to our Statement of Purposes and our Rules ready to be considered at the Annual Meeting in November.

I accepted the office of President at the last annual meeting, in a large part because no matter how long and deep my concern for the Creek, I had no interest in any particular outcome. And I remain as committed as I was then to find an outcome which satisfies all interested parties. Nearly half way into that term, I'm comfortable with the idea that the MPCCC should continue to operate with a wider stakeholder base and a focus on information sharing, building on the admirable tradition of Ponderings. Beyond that I'm wide open to other opinions, even including the option of just going away.

Tony Smith, President, MPCCC, info@mpccc.org

## Works along Moonee Ponds Creek in Moonee Valley

### Boeing Reserve

The hard work put in by the Boeing Reserve Troopers is being supported by contractors employed by Moonee Valley Council. They have been maintaining the planted area, conducted weed control and some enhancement planting of the escarpment.

### Strathnaver reserve

The important remnant and revegetated grasslands are being managed by contractors. Over the past 12 months many trees and shrubs have been removed from the site to allow for regeneration of the grassland. These trees were originally planted to control weedy grass species by shading them out. A number of interesting species have been thriving at the site this year including *Euphorbia drummondii*, *Erodium crinitum* and *Ptilotis spathulatus*. The grassland has been extended toward the sports oval and this season, enhancement planting will continue.

### Horseshoe Bend

This year's community plantings will focus on Horseshoe Bend reserve between Boeing and Strathnaver Reserves, where the out-dated revegetation project will be thinned, weeded, mulched and planted with understorey species.

### Five Mile Creek Reserve

With the removal of woody weeds at the start of this year by Melbourne Water, a forest of riparian shrubs and trees is needed to revegetate the area. The Friends of Five Mile Creek have already started their planting season, with nine people turning up for the first planting day earlier this month. They established lots of Silky Blue Grass but were dismayed to see silt that has washed down the creek apparently from the massive sewer works going on up-stream. They have reported it to the council and to Melbourne Water, but it will take a lot to clean it all out.



*Erodium crinitum*



*Ptilotis spathulatus*



*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*

# Sightings

Fauna and flora observations along the Moonee Ponds Creek. If you see anything interesting, please tell us about it, contact Stella, at [ponderings@mpccc.org](mailto:ponderings@mpccc.org).



While not exactly a 'sighting' it is great to see water in the Jacana Wetlands again, it has been dry for so long. With the water has come a variety of water birds. Anna from Strathmore took these pictures of Black Swans and a Little Pied Cormorant drying its feathers.



For some other fabulous pictures of life at Jacana have a look at Dushy Abeyesekera's fantastic website: [www.eye4photography.com.au/wetlands](http://www.eye4photography.com.au/wetlands). His love of the creek really shines through — it's well worth a visit.



Michelle Gooding from Moonee Valley Council, sent this picture of a Jacky Lizard taken at Five Mile Creek. We used to see lots at the Woodlands Depot, so hopefully this isn't someone's pet that has escaped.

Michelle also reported frogs at Five Mile Creek, and seeing an Australian Hobby, at Five Mile Creek and Horse-shoe bend, and a White-faced Heron at Strathnaver Reserve.



## What's been happening at Woodlands Quarry?

### ***Finally, action is being taken against Enviro Fill***

Next month, a case will be heard in the Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court against Enviro Fill, charged with dumping illegal waste in the Woodlands Historic Park quarry.

### ***What has been happening at the quarry?***

Enviro Fill had a contract with Parks Victoria to fill a quarry within the park with clean landfill, but trucks have been arriving there after 7.00 at night, making members of the Friends of Woodlands and Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek suspicious. They discovered that contamination from the quarry was leaking into the Moonee Ponds Creek and for two years have been trying to get something done about it.

### ***Why was it being filled?***

Parks Victoria decided to fill the quarry for safety reasons, but the water that had collected there was home to turtles and ducks and lots of other wildlife. And in the past, it has been used to fight bushfires, so it is questionable whether filling it with soil was the right solution.

### ***'Clean fill' wasn't clean***

Two years ago, the Friends groups' members reported the contamination to the EPA which conducted a major investigation in August 2008. The supposedly 'clean fill' was found to contain builders' rubble, including bricks,



### **Here are two ring-ins ...**

Steph sent this picture of two Green Tree Frogs sitting in the paw-paw tree in her garden in Queensland. Not a creek sighting, but an exciting one for all that!

contaminated soil, concrete and asphalt and other materials. It certainly wasn't clean!

### ***What's happening now?***

The EPA issued a notice to Enviro Fill to clean up the site, remove the waste they have dumped there and dispose of it properly. They have been charged with dumping industrial waste without a permit, and face fines and/or gaol under the Environment Protection Act 1970.

### ***The contamination hasn't stopped***

In the mean time contamination continues to enter the creek. It is one benefit of the prolonged drought that we have been having, that the situation has not been much worse.

## The Strategic Plan Progress Report

### Where are we up to?

The draft of the Strategic Plan was delivered to the Committee at the beginning of the year, and made widely available for comment. In all 17 submissions were received, and all agreed that it needed a lot of further work.

### Who made comments?

We received input from:

- ⊗ Council officers (Moreland, Moonee Valley and Melbourne)
- ⊗ Major stakeholders (Melbourne Water, Port of Melbourne, EPA, Melbourne Airport)
- ⊗ Friends groups (FoMPC, Lower Moonee Ponds Creek, Royal Park, Kororoit Creek)
- ⊗ Individuals, including members of friends groups (FoMPC, Woodlands, Brunswick South West)

### What happened next?

The steering committee went through all the submissions to collate all the points raised and information provided. These were passed on to the consultants for incorporation in the strategy.

### What happens now?

The final draft is due later this month. It will be checked as quickly as possible by the steering committee, and the consultants instructed to make any final changes and produce the final Strategic Plan. When that final version is in our hands we will schedule a launch event — this will probably be in June.

## World Environment Day at Royal Park – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June

Did you come along to the World Environment Day at Royal Park last year? If so, you will know that there was lots going on, not just planting a swathe of trees, shrubs, grasses, and other native plants. This year promises to be just as exciting.

The event will start at 1.00 pm and there will be:

- ⊗ Planting with the help of the Serco team
- ⊗ Indigenous interpretation, with **Fay Ball**. Fay uses artefacts to teach about the local Indigenous groups and to explore connections to the land and creek
- ⊗ Woungim (boomerang) throwing with **Brendan Marks**, a local artist, educator and cultural advisor.
- ⊗ Somali and Eritrean cultural food, Coffee Ceremony and Henna painting, with the **African Women's Network**
- ⊗ A close encounter with the water bugs – explore what is living in our water ways with **Waterwatch**
- ⊗ Displays, hand outs and maps by **City of Melbourne Rangers** and **Friends of Royal Park**

The afternoon will finish off with an international afternoon tea – not just Lamingtons and Anzac biscuits, but a selection of sweet and savoury Vietnamese, African, Greek, Italian treats!

So come along in your planting clothes, bring your gloves, and a hat if it is sunny, and join CityLink Community Connections for a rewarding and fun afternoon.

### Getting there:

The event will be held in **Royal Park, at the corner of Macarthur Road and The Avenue, Melway 2B, ref B2**

**Tram:** Take tram 19, get off at stop 13 or 14

**Train:** to Royal Park station on the Upfield Line then walk to the planting site

**Cycle:** Take one of the many Royal Park bike trails

**Drive:** Corner of Macarthur Road and The Avenue

Parking provided on The Avenue, Gatehouse Street or Royal Parade



For further contact Bronwyn Riddell  
[bronwynriddell@hotmail.com](mailto:bronwynriddell@hotmail.com) or 0438 355 953

## Tullamarine Land Fill Update

Reporting to those of you concerned about how we are managing our hazardous waste and the future of the Tullamarine toxic dump (now closed). Tullamarine Landfill Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (TLRAC) last met on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at which Transpacific Industries (TPI) informed us that it has decided to disband the committee for a new Stakeholder forum

The Committee used to be comprised of four local resident representatives, a representative from the airport, Parks Vic, Melbourne Water, FoMPC, and Friends of Steele Creek, as well as the EPA and the Western Region Environment Centre. In its wisdom, TPI has decided to disband this committee.

### New stakeholder forum

Instead of four community representatives, it intends to select six from the local area (including the current four). It is not clear how the additional participants will be 'selected'. The other representatives of organisations will remain the same.

### No more Advisory Committee meetings

And instead of meetings where all representatives will be present to share information and hold TPI to account, TPI will now hold separate quarterly meetings with each of the stakeholders; the residents as a group, but the organisational representatives, individually.

TPI intends to hold these meetings on-site where appropriate, the rationale being that a one-on-one meeting affords 'the platform to discuss matters that are of specific concern ... at length and uninterrupted ... so that there is no privilege.'

### TPI will control what is discussed and shared

The format and content of all such meetings will be determined by TPI. It is not clear how the record of what was discussed will be maintained, or whether what was discussed will be shared with the other Advisory Group representatives. These changes were discussed at the TLRAC meeting on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March, and feedback was requested by 2<sup>nd</sup> April. We wait and see what develops.

For further information or to comment on these moves by TPI, contact Bronwyn Riddell [bronwynriddell@hotmail.com](mailto:bronwynriddell@hotmail.com) or 0438 355 953

## Bat Count



You may have read last month, some reports in the paper or heard talk back on the radio about the bats in Melbourne and elsewhere in Victoria. There appeared to be twice as many flying foxes as normal in Melbourne, a couple of thousand in Bendigo, a camp in Sale, Bairnsdale and a few extras also in the Otways.

This was all probably due to the heavy rains up north driving them south in search of food. And bat counters were out in force across Victoria, to coincide with the monthly Yarra Bend bat count at the end of March.

Around 70 people came to last month's mega-count in Melbourne - there were plenty of counters and the estimate was around the 60,000+ mark! With so many bats and such a long count it was quite difficult to get a really accurate count - but it was somewhere around that number.

Static and flyout counts were conducted around the state at about the same time, with about 17,000 in four camps in Gippsland, about 35,000 in Geelong and Otways and 3,000 in Bendigo - a combined total for Victoria of about 115,000. May I extend my thanks to the many people from around the state who participated in the counts. Rod van der Ree

**For details of the next Bat Count see the Events Page**

# What's happening in the coming months?

## May & June Planting Calendar

Date	Friends Group	Time	Location	Melway Ref	Council
Sat 1 May	Friends of Strathmore Ponds / Boeing Reserve Troopers	10am - 12 noon	Horseshoe Bend on Moonee Ponds Creek between Strathnaver Reserve and Boeing Reserve	16 D5/6	Moonee Valley
Sun 2 May	Friends of Five Mile Creek	2 - 4pm	End of Government Road, Essendon	28 J2	Moonee Valley
Sun 16 May	Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek	1.30 - 3.30pm	The Tarnuk end of Wright St, Westmeadows and follow the signs	5 G6	Hume
Sun 23 May	Everyone is welcome!	10am - 12 noon	CityLink Ornamental Pond, across Mt Alexander Rd, opposite Flemington Community Centre - the red poles (see below)	29 B 11	Moonee Valley
Sun 6 June	Friends of Five Mile Creek	2 - 4pm	End of Government Road, Essendon	28 J2	Moonee Valley
Sun 6 June	Everyone is welcome!	1 - 4 pm	World Environment Day activities, Royal Park, Corner of Macarthur Road and The Avenue (see article)	2B B2	Melbourne
Sun 13 June	Friends of the Sacred Kingfisher	10am - 12 noon	Meet at the end of Pascoe St, Westmeadows	6 B7	Hume
Sun 27 June	Friends of Westbreen Creek	10am - 2pm	Joyce Reserve, Northumberland Rd, Pascoe Vale	17 A6	Moreland
Sun 27 June	Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek	1.30 - 3.30pm	Tarnuk end of Wright St, Westmeadows, and follow the signs	5 G6	Hume

## Events for your diary



The next bat count is 26th May, meet at 5:00 pm, Yarra Bend Park golf course Car park (2D G7) New and regular counters welcome and very much appreciated. Further information contact Dr Rod van der Ree, on 8344 3661, 0412 562 429 or rvdr@unimelb.edu.au

**"Rakalis and Platypus"**  
Don't miss this talk organised by Moreland Council Monday 21st, June at 6pm. Council Offices, 90 Bell St Coburg, Melway 17 J12, (Parking via Urquhart St), Further information call Sam Neidra on: 8311 4386

## Putting Down the Roots of the Wurun



*The Wurundjeri people were the first people to occupy the area of Melbourne. 'Wurun' meaning the river gum, 'Jeri' meaning the grub that lives in the river gum tree.*

### Sunday 23 May 2010 will be a big day for the Creek and the local community!

Starting at 10am CityLink Neighbourhood Connections and FoMPC will be hosting a community planting day under the banner of National Tree Day, as part of a commitment to improving the immediate environment and developing positive relationships with and between communities.

Five Wurun (River Gum) trees will be planted to symbolise the community and respect for the land. Each tree will represent a different group: men, women, youth and children of our community and one tree to celebrate Biodiversity.

Volunteers will also be asked to help plant 300 shrubs and grasses along the ornamental pond.

Wurundjeri Elder, Ian Hunter, will perform a 'Welcome to Country' smoking ceremony, Minua Gidij Murra Dancers will perform traditional dances, Debney Meadows students will share a song they have learnt and there will be a performance by the Kensington Chinese Friendship Association Choir. The Rotary group will cook us all lunch on their BBQ. There will be henna painting, African coffee, and community food and music, so come along and be part of the Moonee Ponds Creek community. It promises to be a great day!

For further information visit the National Tree Day website [www.treeday.planetark.com/site/45018](http://www.treeday.planetark.com/site/45018) where you can register as a volunteer, call Bronwyn Riddell on 0438 355 953 or email [bronwynriddell@hotmail.com](mailto:bronwynriddell@hotmail.com)



This project is funded jointly by CityLink and Melbourne Water



The Ornamental Pond after floods in 2005

