



# Ponderings

Seasonal newsletter of the  
Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek  
Summer 2017 | Issue 57

advocate educate interpret participate rehabilitate revegetate

## TWINS THEN QUADS .... A WHITE-FACED HERON COUPLE DO US PROUD!

It was the third week of August when Carolyn Layton sent through a text saying she had spotted a pair of White-faced Herons possibly building a nest high up in a eucalypt at the bottom of John Street, Oak Park. They were indeed building and over several months produced two healthy fledglings. Before this pair had left the nest the parents had moved downstream to Brosnan Crescent, Strathmore and built a second nest, this activity completely missed until Nina spotted the nest with chicks in a tree just opposite her gate. The second nesting produced four chicks. As we go to press the three youngest are branching and flying out over the creek. This is four months of dedication by the parents and it's stunning to know that in less than a year they may start all over again.

Oak Park TWINS



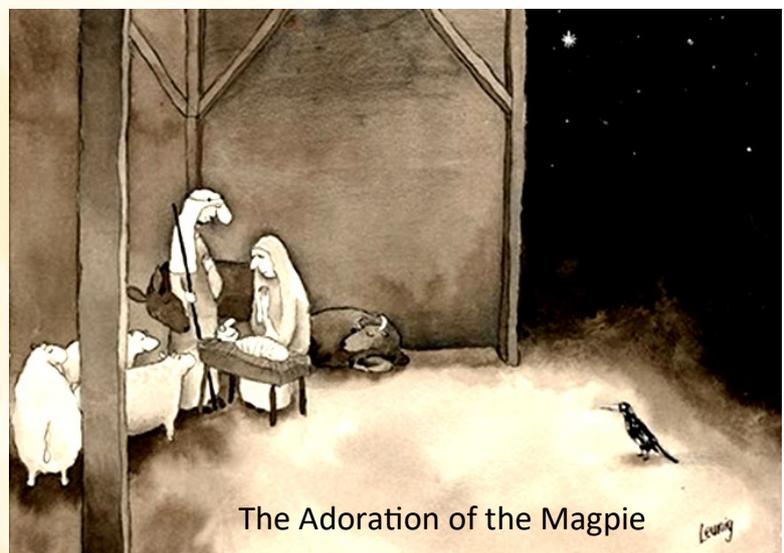
Strathmore QUADS



Friends of Moonee Ponds  
Creek wish everyone a  
**Merry Christmas**  
&

**Happy New Year**

We look forward to sharing  
many activities in 2018  
protecting and enhancing the  
**Moonee Ponds Creek**



The Adoration of the Magpie

Image courtesy of Michael Leunig

# BUGS and FROGS NIGHT



Well done to Yvonne Cabuang and James Frazer of Melbourne Water's Waterwatch and Frogwatch teams for a great night on the Moonee Ponds Creek at Westmeadows entertaining an enthusiastic bunch of kids from the 1st Tullapark Scout Group. The Group had a chance to take a closer look at some of the smaller animals that call Moonee Ponds Creek home and were shown how to identify and record them. This was followed by a guided walk to listen for frogs with a lesson in using the Frog Census Phone App that so easily records them for the Frog Census.



James shows the transition from frogs eggs to tadpoles to frogs.



Shhhh! Time to listen for the frogs



Yvonne introduces the group to the many small critters that inhabit the creek



Close encounters with the Creek's tiny water creatures



## JACANA WETLANDS by Sian Conn

Approximately 90 percent of work at the Southern Wetland area has been completed with the remainder of works to be completed early 2018. Work has also been continuing on the raising of the embankment at the Southern Sediment Pond (just beside the M80) and installing a number of pits.

We have commenced work at the Northern Wetland area (closest to the football reserve), with this area being the last to be completed for the project prior to revegetation.

Early next year the temporary bike path around the Southern Sediment Pond will be removed and a new (bike friendly) concrete path installed in the original path location along the top of the sediment pond embankment.

Throughout the project Consultant ecologists have been engaged to carry out inspections on areas where vegetation clearing and dewatering have been undertaken to ensure that no fauna or habitat are disturbed during works. Growling Grass Frog monitoring has also been carried out by consultant ecologists within the wetlands to ensure that the construction works do not have any negative impacts to the Growling Grass Frog population that inhabit the area.

At this stage we are estimating construction works to be completed late March to mid April 2018, weather permitting.

Our site will be closed from Friday 22 December 2017 and returning to full operation on Wednesday 10 January 2018.

The Jacana Wetland Upgrade team would like to wish you a safe holiday and we look forward to working with you in the new year.



The wetland was drained and refilled several times during the works



## UNION STREET ESCARPMENT by Kaye Oddie

The Union Street Escarpment is a recognised geological feature along the Moonee Ponds Creek in Brunswick. Its geological interest is as an exposed outcrop of Silurian rock, the bedrock for much of Melbourne. It was 'saved' from the extensive waterway and drainage works undertaken by the MMBW (Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works) to address flood control in the 1960/70s, which saw much of the Moonee Ponds Creek channelised and lined with concrete. An early photograph from 1922 shows that the Creek has retained its original water course between the embankments. Earlier still, in the late 1800s, however, the cliffs were used by the Commonwealth Ladies Rifle Club!

Abutting the embankment upstream is a small section of remnant native vegetation – Escarpment Shrubland and Riparian Woodland that contains plant species of local, regional and state significance. Specialist surveys and reports have guided infill plantings with indigenous species, undertaken by local community groups such as the Brunswick Tree Group, South West Planters, Moonee Ponds Creek Coordination Committee and Moreland Council. And, after a big rainfall event, there is a little waterfall down the escarpment.

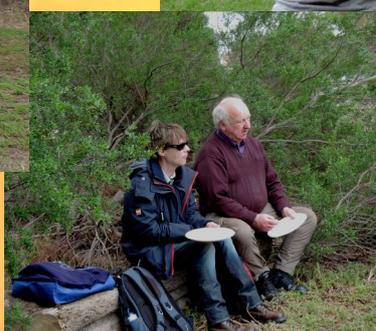
The Union Street Escarpment is now complimented on the opposite side of the Creek by a revegetation project on the Moonee Ponds Creek Linear Reserve ('Shelley Hillock'), a CityLinkTullaWidening, Landcare Australia project undertaken earlier this year.

Sources for this information include reports by Moreland Council, MMBW and research by Marcus Lancaster, PhD student, University of Melbourne.



## HOPETOUN AVENUE RESERVE - MORE TO CELEBRATE!

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, local residents and members of Moreland and Hume Councils gathered at the Hopetoun Avenue Reserve in Brunswick West on Saturday 9 December for an end of year BBQ and to celebrate the saving of part of the Reserve from rezoning/sale/development by Melbourne Water during the year. A concerted campaign by local residents and FoMPC, who were all strongly opposed to the proposal, saw Melbourne Water reoffer the land to Moreland Council which purchased for retention as public parkland. A great outcome! And there is more to celebrate as Moreland Council has received a 2018 'Corridors of Green' grant from Melbourne Water to upgrade the plantings in the Reserve. These will include infill plantings of native trees, shrubs, ground covers and grasses along the embankments closer to the Albion St bridge, adding to existing plantings and undertake new plantings along the northern fenceline. The plantings are intended to provide some floral colour and enhance biodiversity and habitat in the Reserve. Open grassed areas will be retained as they are enjoyed for informal play.





Spotted Marsh and Common Froglets have been recorded in the pond

## NURSERY BEND

The tenant at the Nursery Corner site has now vacated the property and Council will be undertaking the following activities over the coming months:

- Vegetation assessment
- Building assessment
- Site clean-up

During this period the site will remain fenced and locked.

It is anticipated that the masterplan process will commence in Spring 2018.



## DID YOU KNOW

“AT COBURG COURT YESTERDAY SEVEN LADS, NAMED HARROLD ALEXANDER, BERT ALEXANDER, ALFRED ALEXANDER, WM. FARROW, FRANK THOMPSON, HENRY GAMGE AND JOHN CALLAGHAN, WERE FINED 2/6 EACH, OR 24 HOURS IMPRISONMENT, FOR BATHING IN THE MOONEE PONDS CREEK NEAR REYNARDS ROAD, COBURG, ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, 13TH MARCH.”

SOURCE: THE AGE WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH 1904

## Join the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek for \$10 per year

Help preserve and improve the Moonee Ponds Creek's natural environment. For information and to join, go to [mooneepondscreek.org.au](http://mooneepondscreek.org.au) and complete the membership form or write to PO Box 54, Essendon VIC 3040.



## 5 MILE CREEK WORKS

Contractors have been busy carrying out restoration works along the Western Bank of 5 Mile Creek Reserve. Besides the usual scope of works (weed control, coir logs, mulching) you may have also noticed a strange looking product covering the highly eroded bank upstream.

This is an Australian product called Grassroots which we are trialling for the first time. Grassroots is made from heavy duty synthetic fibres and helps stabilise and reduce further damage on highly eroded embankments. The porous material can be installed directly over seeded areas or small cell plantings, allowing germination to still occur. In this case Poa cells were planted directly into the matting.

More information on Grassroots can be found here: [geofabrics.co/products/grassroots%20%AE](http://geofabrics.co/products/grassroots%20%AE)



Before



After

## BOEING RESERVE UPDATE

by Luke Casey, Acting Sport and Recreation Coordinator

Trees have been removed in preparation for the new baseball sports pavilion that is being built at Boeing Reserve. There are in total 27 trees that have been removed for the new sports pavilion, however, Council can assure you that offset planting is included in the contract and as a result 31 new trees will be planted throughout Boeing Reserve. The new trees will include:

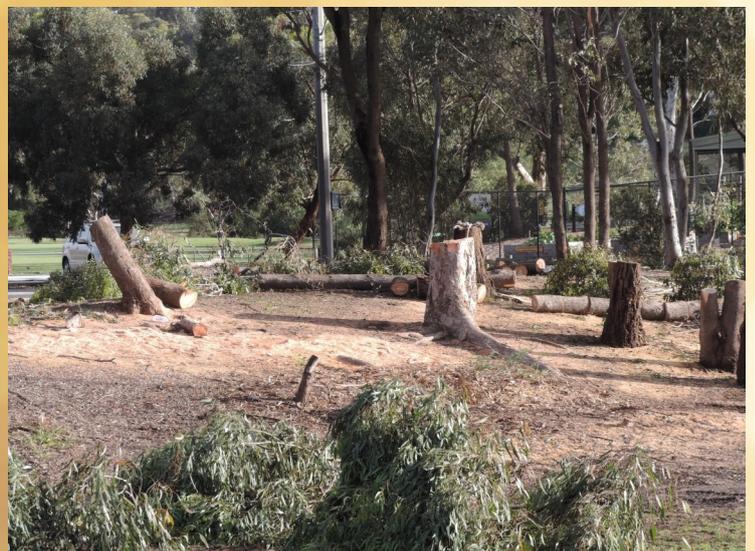
- Eucalyptus Microcarpa
- Eucalyptus Melliodora / Eucalyptus Polyanthemus.

The new development provides an opportunity to strengthen the vegetation in this area at more appropriate locations. It is reasonable to require adherence to the following:

- Offset planting to ensure no net tree loss
- New vegetation planted around the new pavilion and spread widely throughout the park
- Provision of canopy trees with spreading crowns located at suitable sites within the wider reserve
- Effective screen planting along the northern boundary to soften the appearance of built form
- Planting to ensure views and vistas are not compromised
- Ensure appropriate species are planted to match those removed.



Council will be erecting a sign shortly which will inform the community on the Boeing Reserve Baseball Pavilion Project and will also be providing rolling updates on our website throughout the project.



# Sightings



Shining Bronze Cuckoo and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo spotted at Woodlands Historic Park



Australian Hobby and Welcome Swallows seen in Strathmore



The Little Pied Cormorant and Tawny Frogmouth family were found along the creek in Oak Park



Yellow-rumped Thornbill on a fence beside the shared path at Jacana Wetland

Contributions to Ponderings welcome. Please send your images and stories to [ponderings@mpccc.org](mailto:ponderings@mpccc.org).

## HUME NEWS

There is now a Community groups page on Hume Council's website, currently consisting of solely Friends group contact details. The page can be reached via a shortened link: [hume.vic.gov.au/friendsgroups](http://hume.vic.gov.au/friendsgroups)

### BIRDS OF HUME NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Nearly 9000 copies of the Birds of Hume field guide have been distributed to help community members identify local birds. You can get an electronic copy of the bird guide at

[hume.vic.gov.au/files/sharedassets/hume\\_website/environment/native\\_plants\\_and\\_animals/birds\\_of\\_hume/birds\\_of\\_hume\\_brochure\\_a5\\_-\\_web\\_sm.pdf](http://hume.vic.gov.au/files/sharedassets/hume_website/environment/native_plants_and_animals/birds_of_hume/birds_of_hume_brochure_a5_-_web_sm.pdf)

### FAUNA GUIDE

Following on from the huge success of the Birds of Hume field guide, Council is keen to produce the companion field guide, the Fauna of Hume in a similar format. If you have any photos of frogs, lizards snakes or mammals that you would be happy to donate to this project it will be much appreciated.

A species list of the mammals, frogs and reptiles can be found on the MPC Facebook. At this stage, we are still unsure if going to include fish and how many invertebrates to include (e.g. maybe just butterflies). The photos don't have to be taken in Hume.

Please submit photos to Melissa Doherty at [melissado@hume.vic.gov.au](mailto:melissado@hume.vic.gov.au) or Karen Fowler at [karenf@hume.vic.gov.au](mailto:karenf@hume.vic.gov.au) if possible by Friday 5 Jan 2018. We will then have a selection committee to debate which are the best photos to include in mid to late January. We are open to any suggestions on what we should include in the guide re advice to see critters or supporting native wildlife. Looking forward to being amazed by some beautiful photos of our local animals.

# MORELAND NEWS

To enhance conservation values, mowing has been stopped on a large area on the creek side of **JP Fawkner Reserve** with it to be transformed into a Grassy Woodland over time. The area has a good stand of mostly indigenous, established trees and a number of understorey species consistent with this type of vegetation, fighting to stay alive under a sea of Chilean Needle Grass. A range of techniques will be applied throughout the site to control weeds and encourage indigenous plant species to establish, including selective herbicide spraying, ecological burning, mulching, revegetation, scalping and direct seeding. Pedestrian access will be maintained through the site.

This will have a range of benefits including:

- Increased plant diversity and habitat for a range of native species including birds, butterflies, insects and reptiles
- Compaction removed from around the existing trees, helping to improve tree health
- Improved ecological function, increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change
- Reduction in the need for intensive and ongoing human interventions over time, which will reduce long term costs and fossil fuel use.

The Clean Air and Urban Landscape Hub will be monitoring the site over a number of years, particularly focussing on the changes in insect behaviour as a result of these strategies.

The **Herbert Street Living Stream** project is establishing really well and a set of steps have recently been constructed at the end of Adelaide Street to help residents access the parkland. Further planting is being planned for 2018 to further enhance this section of the corridor.

Thanks to everyone who provided feedback on the **Bryant Family and Kelvin Thompson Reserve playgrounds** during the consultation period. Detailed designs are currently underway with construction due to be completed in the first half of 2018.

Two new interpretive signs have been installed at **Westbreen Creek**, discussing the local frog life and the turbulent history of the creek from a military dumping ground to much loved parkland asset. This project, and some associated creek revegetation works, have been supported through funding from Melbourne Waters Corridors of Green grants program.

Steps recently constructed at the end of Adelaide Street

New signs have been placed along the Westbreen Creek



## MOONEE PONDS CREEK CATCHMENT COLLABORATION

It has been pleasing to see the continued momentum of the Moonee Ponds Creek Catchment COLLABORATION throughout the year. Nineteen people from 13 collaborating organisations attended the final workshop of the year; discussing the progress of the Collaboration activities underway, and the results of a recent evaluation of the experience of participants. The group held the final site visit of the year along the Creek in Westmeadows, learning some of the history of conservation actions from long-time Creek environmentalist Julie Law.

The Collaboration group has been referred to in documents and recommendations to the West Gate Tunnel Project proponents. We have been listed as a group that the project proponents must engage with in development of new open space alongside the Creek. This shows the increasing recognition of this group as a formal entity.

A new gate has been installed in Bent St, Kensington to improve access to the open space area along the Creek. This issue was identified by Kensington Association earlier in the year, and relationships developed through the Collaboration, led to action on this issue.

During the year aerial footage of the Creek was collected and a number of short videos have been made. You can access them at the following links:

**MPC Highlights**  
[vimeo.com/236915078](https://vimeo.com/236915078)

**MPC Southern Section**  
[vimeo.com/236451512](https://vimeo.com/236451512)

**MPC Northern Section**  
[vimeo.com/236392467](https://vimeo.com/236392467)

**Yuroke Creek**  
[vimeo.com/237108129](https://vimeo.com/237108129)

## SAD OUTCOME FOR MOONEE PONDS CREEK with WEST GATE TUNNEL PROJECT

The Minister for Planning has today announced his approval of the West Gate Tunnel Project, which will put elevated viaducts over the Moonee Ponds Creek, close to Dynon Rd, West Melbourne and a low bridge diagonally across the prime section of Creek open space adjacent to E-Gate (between Dynon Rd and Footscray Rd).

The Minister for Planning in his assessment considered that the adverse social and environmental impacts imposed by the “*heavily shaded environments*” under the bridge and the viaducts over the Creek could be addressed by “*careful design*”. Perhaps he hasn’t inspected the desolate undercrofts of existing CityLink structures!

The Minister also recommended for the Government: “*Development of a landscape master plan for Moonee Ponds Creek be undertaken to realise the strategic planning for this open space and its role for future renewal areas*”. The landscape plan would only cover the section of the Creek between Dynon Rd and Footscray Rd and the plan would only be developed “*in parallel with the evolution of Government’s development strategy for the E-Gate urban renewal site*”. At the EES hearings, however long timelines of 10+ years were cited for the redevelopment of E-Gate and if the nearby urban renewal areas currently being developed - Macaulay and Arden - are any guide then zero additional open space will be included!

This is a very disappointing outcome for the Creek and for the FoMPC, which fought hard against this expanded Transurban tollway/freeway project. The original aim of the Western Distributor was to provide an improved truck connection between the West Gate Freeway and the Port of Melbourne, removing trucks from Footscray and other inner west suburban streets, not a project that has morphed into putting a CBD access connection and extending Wurundjeri Way over the Moonee Ponds Creek, significantly and detrimentally impacting on the Creek’s open space amenity and potential enhancement.

## CREEK WATCH

**Rapid change of water levels or discolouration of problems along the creek that need to be reported:**

- ◇ 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 into the creek. This needs to be **urgently reported to the EPA**.

## CREEKY LINKS

mooneepondscreek.org.au  
facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek  
friendsofmerricreek.org.au/  
foec.org.au  
facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekInc  
facebook.com/groups/1541338476087146  
fmvonline.com  
bowerbird.org.au/projects/5249  
whp.altervista.org/  
werribeeriver.org.au  
**Contact us if you have any other links to share**