



Ponderings

SEASONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
FRIENDS OF MOONEE PONDS CREEK

SUMMER 2019 | ISSUE 65

advocate educate interpret participate rehabilitate revegetate

Happy New Year

Wishing everyone good health and happiness as we move forward into the 2020's. In this Issue we report on the special celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek. The occasion provided many opportunities to reflect on the fine partnerships with Local Councils and State Authorities culminating in the Chain of Ponds Collaboration.

Thank you to all of our volunteers who have given their time to come to plantings and clean-up days, to attend meetings and consultations and to write submissions advocating to protect and enhance the Moonee Ponds Creek. We've come a long way in thirty years and the future looks bright.

Stormwater Victoria Award

**Excellence in Strategic and Master Planning - Winner
Chain of Ponds Collaboration - Transforming the
Moonee Ponds Creek Through Collective Action**

Melbourne Water, Moreland City Council, Moonee Valley City Council, Hume City Council, Melbourne City Council, Yarra Valley Water, City West Water, Parks Victoria, Victorian Planning Authority, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Friends of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek, Kensington Association, Moonee BUG, Living Colour Studio

between organisations and community to drive change in a catchment which supports a healthier waterway.

In October 2018 an historic agreement to help transform the Moonee Ponds Creek was signed by 15 organisations to commit to the Chain of Ponds Collaboration and work together in finding lasting solutions for the catchment which will transform the Moonee Ponds Creek into an iconic waterway for Melbourne that provides high social and environmental benefits”.

Congratulations on this outstanding recognition especially to Lori Arthur for her role as Collaboration Lead during this year of fine achievements.



“The Chain of Ponds Collaboration is breaking new ground in how Melbourne Water delivers waterway management.

Rather than sole organisations

trying to implement another plan for a creek, this collaboration has established a new partnership model



The 30th Anniversary Celebration

There were speeches. There was cake. There were memories and photos to share. The celebration was deemed a huge success even though rain prevented the planned walk to the Herbert Street Living Stream and the Great Divide (end of the concrete). Moreland City Councillor Helen Davidson attended along with Lori Arthur, Alex English and Vince Andreaana.



The Cake

Councillor Jodi Jackson represented Hume City Council and Milly Burke was there from Moonee Valley. Melissa Doherty (Hume) was an apology but sent her best wishes. The great partnerships with the Councils was celebrated by Kelvin in his speech and reinforced by our new president Peter Scully.

It was wonderful to have Site Office landscape architects Chris Sawyer and Susie Kumar with us along with their daughter Lily. Their iconic Chronology posters crafted for the Chain of Ponds Moonee Ponds Creek Action Plan adorned the banister of the outside terrace.

Some older stalwarts were there too. We were delighted that Joseph Griffiths escorted Brunswick South-West Planters Audrey Biggs to the party. Ginny Moylan and Anne Black represented Five Mile Creek while long time passionate advocate and Friend of Upper Moonee Ponds Creek Julie Law was unable to be present and we missed her wisdom.

Audrey Biggs and Joseph Griffith



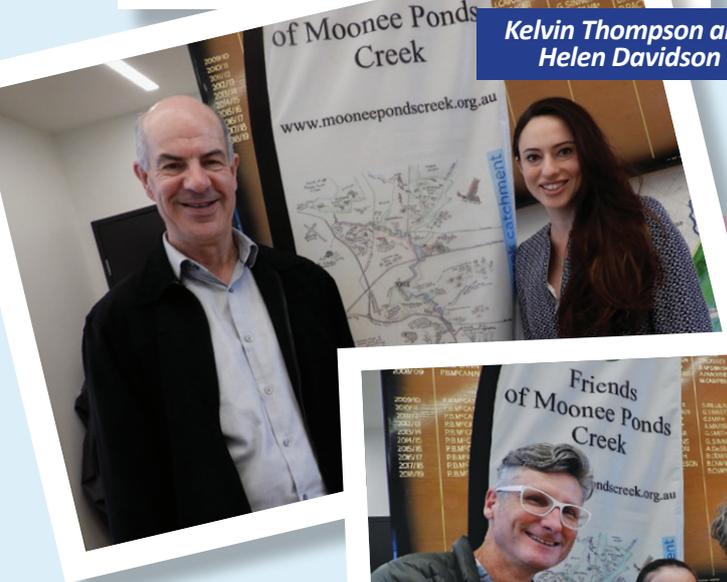
Alex Smart



Kaye Oddie and President Peter Scully

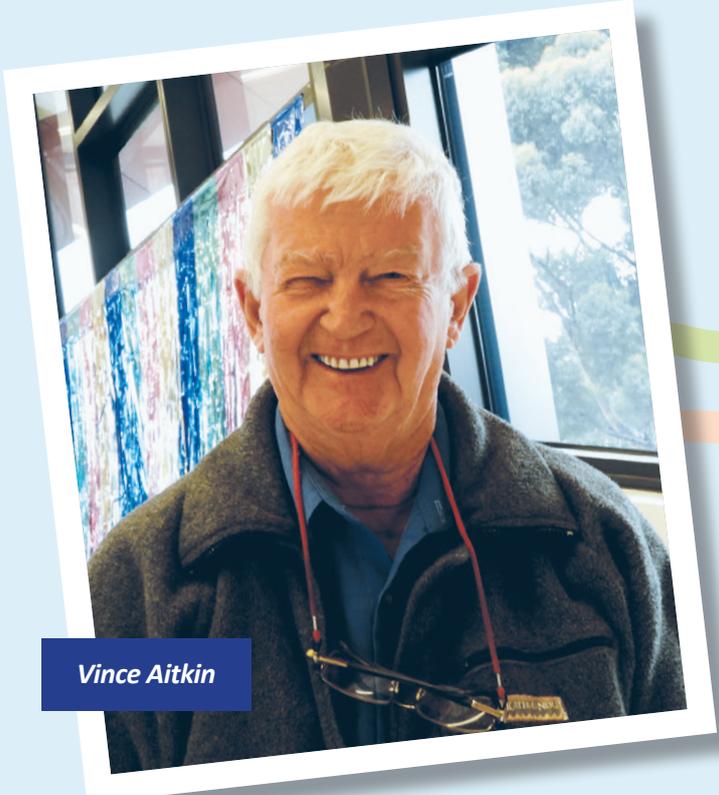


Kelvin Thompson and Helen Davidson



Chris Sayer and Susie Kumar (Site Office) with Lily





Vince Aitkin

Finally what a treat to have a pair from the earliest days of the Friends history with Allan Thomson and Alex Smart present. The rest of us acknowledge all of your great contributions and support.

We'll place Kelvin's lively history of the past 30 years on the website and on Facebook in Files.

Here's a sneak preview....

"The Moonee Ponds Creek was once a charming and tranquil area, with an abundance of natural vegetation and wildlife.

When European settlers came across it, the Moonee Ponds Creek terminated in what was known as the Blue Lake.

In the 1840s George Gordon McCrae, looking at it from Flagstaff Hill, described Blue Lake as "Intensely blue, nearly oval and full of the clearest salt water, but is by no means deep...the whole air was heavy with the mingled odours of the golden Myrnong flowers and purple fringed lilies... curlews, ibises and blue cranes were there in numbers... Black Swans occasionally visited it, as did flocks of wild ducks..."

To be continued...



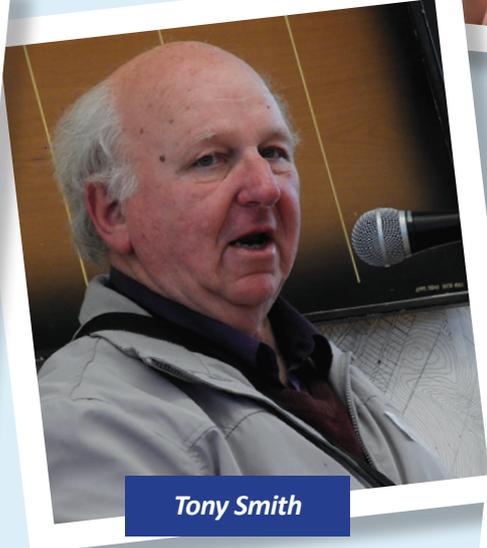
Jodi Jackson (Hume) with Elissa Simmons and Milly Burke



Back: Alex English and Vince Andreana

Front: Friends of Five Mile Creek

Maurice Austin



Tony Smith



Lori Arthur with Jack

The Chain of Ponds Collaboration



Participants celebrate the end of a successful year.

The Chain of Ponds Collaboration held its last meeting for 2019 on Dec 12 and it provided a timely opportunity to sum up the year's work and discuss projects and opportunities for the year ahead. The Chain of Ponds Collaboration has a number of working groups aiming to achieve outcomes at a catchment scale. The working groups include: Governance, Planning, Mapping & Data, Litter, Transport/Trails/Connectivity, Catchment Modelling and EcoArts.

Highlights from two of the reports presented at the meeting were: the Planning group's preparation of a Moonee Ponds Creek Catchment Land Use Planning Considerations document. The document outlines the CoP's vision, objective, identified values and threats and planning tools with the objective being to protect the Moonee Ponds Creek from inappropriate development. Values included heritage, flora and fauna, significant landscapes, urban design and open space and public realm. The document identified threats, gap analysis and covered planning tools. It is a succinct document and was used in the CoP's submission to the Waterways of the West consultation.

The Trails/Transport/Connectivity group is finalising its report, based on the following principles: honour the waterway; provide a sense of place; establish a cohesive character and identity; promote physical, visual, natural and social connectivity along the Creek corridor; and respect all users. Detailed guidelines then cover access, a linear park, bicycle corridors, lighting, signage, resting places, scenic stops, cultural heritage, park furniture, links with local neighbourhoods, other parks and open spaces and biolinks.

Reports for many projects in the pipeline were also presented and which the CoP is promoting, supporting and providing

input to. These include the Victorian Planning Authority's Moonee Ponds Creek Implementation Plan for the lower Moonee Ponds Creek; two Integrated Water Management (IWM) proposed projects - Arden urban renewal area stormwater treatment measures and a Catchment wide litter mapping project; continuing input into the Waterways of the West project; ongoing participation in Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways Strategy implementation; updates on the Brunswick West-Essendon landscape and connectivity project and the Brosnan Crescent pilot naturalisation proposal; and the FoMPC's long-called for restoration of the Westmeadows meander. A number of other projects and opportunities were also raised and discussed, illustrating the success of the Chain of Ponds Collaboration.



Lori Arthur

The meeting also especially thanked Lori Arthur for fulfilling the role of Lead of the Chain of Ponds Collaboration over the past twelve months; for her efficiency, expertise and proactively maintaining and widening the scope of collaboration

between not only the CoP member organisations but also with other organisations and groups, programs and projects. The informative newsletters she prepared well illustrated the breadth of CoP activities over the year. Well done Lori and thanks!

www.melbournewater.com.au/what-we-are-doing/works-and-projects-near-me/all-projects/chain-ponds-collaboration

Paddle against Plastic

Ocean Crusaders had their third MPC Paddle against Plastic for the year at Docklands on December 1. The weather was windy and freezing despite being the first day of Summer. A much smaller than anticipated turnout of 48 volunteers picked up 484kg of rubbish in just over two hours. Director Ian Thomson lamented that no matter how many times they come back the rubbish is still there, calling again for a container deposit scheme to match other States. The combined total of close to 1930kg for the 3 MPC events is a staggering and depressing statistic! Polystyrene remains a depressing component much

of it broken down into tiny beads dangerous for wildlife. Partners in this endeavour included *Port of Melbourne* and *City of Melbourne* for funding and volunteers from *Beach Patrol Australia*, *@love our street 3008* and *Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek*. The really good news is Ocean Crusaders plan to start up a full time team in Melbourne in 2020 headed by Mike Sparg. They stated that the waterways of Melbourne need a lot of work and this can only be done with a full time crew. Details of their activities will be posted on Facebook. Sincere thanks again to Ian Thomson and his Crew.



Reminiscing with Maurice



Among the displays at the 30th Anniversary Celebration was a wonderful collection of images by Maurice Austin. Maurice has been a regular feature in Ponderings for some time now and many present at the gathering were happy to put a face to the familiar name. Some stalwarts such as Audrey Biggs were already long time friends. Maurice's collection provide many startling images of changes along the Creek over the years brought about by ambitious strategic planning by Melbourne

Water such as the construction of the Jacana Wetlands and by the sheer hard work and dedication of the Friends Groups enhancing the creek side habitat. These images looking West towards Glenroy show the transformation that has taken place in the Jacana Wetlands. The Wetlands have led to an massive increase in species diversity along the Moonee Ponds Creek, celebrated in the wonderful images in Sightings.



Come along to our Bunjil's Marroun Healing Ceremony for an Acknowledgement of History by a Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder and performance by Uncle Kutcha Edwards and his band.

Location

5 mile creek reserve, 2 Government Road, Essendon (Melway 28 J2)
Hosted by *Moonee Valley City Council*

Bunjil's Marroun healing ceremony

**Sunday, 26
January**

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

A Bunjil's Marroun healing ceremony to respectfully acknowledge the pain and suffering experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



Down the Drain

Lost Tributaries of the MPC Part 5: Chapman Main Drain

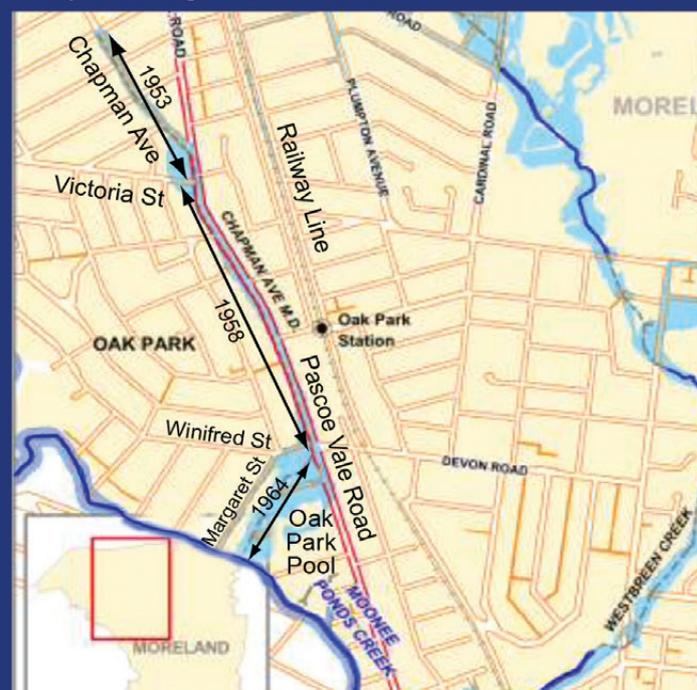
..... by David Widdowson

Driving along Pascoe Vale Road, just north of the Oak Park Swimming Pool, not many motorists would realise that they are travelling in an old creek bed. The landscape does give some clue; it is a narrow valley all the way until Chapman Avenue, when Pascoe Vale Road suddenly climbs up to the Glenroy plateau. This was once a tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek, until it was turned into the Chapman Avenue Main Drain in the 1950s and 1960s.

By the time of the rapid post-war urbanisation of Oak Park in the middle years of the twentieth century, residents were beginning to complain about the open drain that was "a menace to health, rat-infested, overflowed frequently in winter, and that the increased effluent load [makes] it even more unpleasant during the summer months". Eventually, the city of Broadmeadows agreed to underground the section between Prospect Street and Victoria Street in 1953, and then between Victoria Street and Winifred Street in 1958. Of course this led to increased scouring in the final section, which was put underground in 1964.



The earliest sign of the unnamed creek I could find was this 1860s map of the North Eastern Railway line (as the Carnegie line was once known). Slightly confusing, as it has south up, it shows the Chapman Avenue branch before that road was put in, and the creek continuing as a ditch on the west side of Pascoe Vale Road. The conversion of creek to roadside ditch must have occurred when Pascoe Vale Road was created in the middle years of the nineteenth century, when it was known as Sydney Road (later as Old Sydney Road).



A map of the Main Drains and flood prone areas (courtesy of the SES) shows the location of the drain, beginning in Chapman Avenue, continuing down Pascoe Vale Road to Winifred Street, where it flows south west to the Moonee Ponds Creek.



The 1945 Melbourne aerial view shows that the lower reaches were the only scoured section. Hints of the open channel can just be made out on the western side of Pascoe Vale Road.



The only modern sign of the old creek bed is a depression next to the west cricket oval at Oak Park Sports Centre. The tributary emerges as a pipe just south of the Margaret Road foot bridge - a sad end for a creek that once carved a valley through Oak Park!

Next time: Mascoma Main Drain

A place to call home

Maurice Austin spotted a gorgeous pair of Blue-tongue Lizards in the rocky outcrop at Strathnaver Reserve. Wonder if we'll get the patter of tiny feet.



Protecting Parkland at Strathnaver Reserve

Local resident Nina and Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek member, Kaye Oddie, went in to bat to tighten up the possibility of parkland at Strathnaver Reserve, being taken for 'additional' car parking at the Reserve. Both Nina and Kaye made presentations at a recent Planning Panels Victoria hearings that were considering a Developer Contributions Plan (DCP) for the City of Moonee Valley (AmC194). The DCP is a 'good thing' as it provides a mechanism whereby the Council can apply a levy to future constructions in the municipality, with the levy funds being used for a range of community projects covering works, services and facilities. The lower level car park (recently upgraded) at the Strathnaver Reserve is an example of facilities that would benefit from DCP funding. However, loose wording left open the possible facilitation of constructing more car parking at the Reserve. In response to our submissions, the Council agreed to amend the wording so that it is clear the works at the Strathnaver Reserve car park can only be applied to the existing lower level car park. Any proposal for additional car parking in the form of an upper level car park will have to go through a separate process of review, consultation, endorsement, a planning permit application and possibly a planning scheme amendment. The FoMPC pointed out that new Council strategies such as the Chain of Ponds plan and its Open Space Strategy would, in fact, not support future excision of parkland for car parking.



Creeky Links

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek: mooneeponds creek.org.au

facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneeponds creek

Friends of Merri Creek: friendsofmerricreek.org.au/

Friends of Edgars Creek: foec.org.au

Friends of Steele Creek: facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekInc

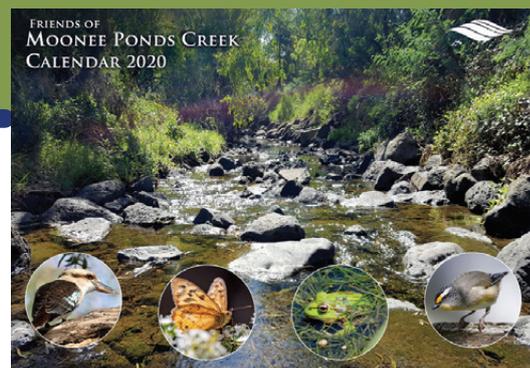
Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley: fmvonline.com

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



Copies of the *Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Calendar 2020* are still available.

Details: www.mooneeponds creek.org.au/calendar/

Concrete Solutions Part 1: History

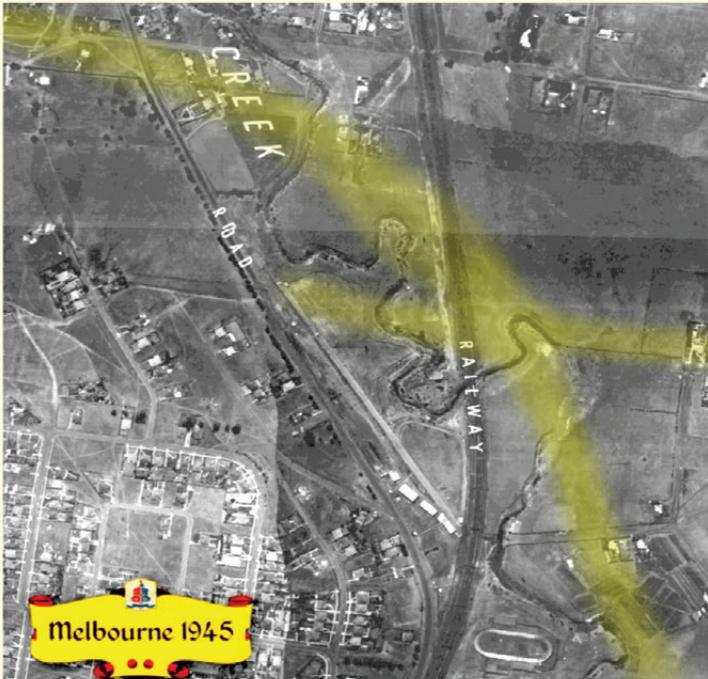
by David Widdowson

Concrete Solutions is a new series looking at the concrete sections of the creek, how they came to be, and possible solutions for their cover up or removal.

By the middle years of the twentieth century, Moonee Ponds Creek was creating problems. Post-war urbanisation had led to increased water run off into the creek, resulting in scouring and flooding of houses and properties that were built too close to its edge. The floods of 1963 were particularly bad. To resolve these issues in the early 1960s, several sections of the creek had bends removed and bluestone and concrete lining added - in particular near Esslemont Reserve, Donald Avenue and Waxman Parade. The concreting of the creek had begun.



Enter into our story, at just the wrong moment, this flying beast! In the late 1960s, Boeing's new 747 or "Jumbo jet" was changing the face of air travel. It was much bigger than any plane before it, requiring longer runways (hence the need to build Tullamarine airport) and pointing towards a boom in air travel, which led to the building of the Tullamarine Freeway. Naturally, the path chosen for the freeway was the valley created by the Moonee Ponds Creek, its areas of unused land the main attraction.



When it came to crossing the creek at the Bell Street interchange, as seen in this aerial view from 1945, the freeway's future path (shown in yellow) meant that at least five bridges would've had to be built if the creek was left as is. Hence the decision to divert the creek and concrete the entire section. This was also highly appealing to a government trying to turn a natural creek into a drain that would cause less erosion and be easier to maintain.



This aerial view from the 1960s, provided by Maurice Austin, shows work in progress on this section of the freeway, with its elevated section at lower right being created from the spoil from the immense new cutting that ran alongside Essendon Airport. The photo also shows Strathmore High School in the background, just after its old creek bed had been filled in.



Downstream in Essendon and West Brunswick, near the Moonee Valley racecourse, it was a similar story, with at least nine crossings of the Creek needed along this straight section of freeway. Hence this became the second major section to be lined with concrete.

Upon completion of the freeway works, the Board of Works liked the result so much that they decided to extend the concrete back through Strathmore, intending to go as far as the trestle bridge in Glenroy. Fortunately, concerned residents managed to stop the concreting by the time it reached Strathmore North Primary School.

The result of all these works was two 3.5 kilometre-long sections of concrete-lined narrow channel, one from Brosnan Crescent in Strathmore to Reynard Street, Pascoe Vale South, the other from Donald Street Essendon, to Union Street Brunswick, both created at a time when creating a concrete drain was considered to be the perfect solution to the problems of an urban waterway!

Kernan Avenue Weeding Day

Just a handful of volunteers turned up for a morning of weeding at Kernan Ave in Pascoe Vale but it was a case of a few hands making a big impact. In a couple of hours we accumulated a large pile of weeds and the beds looked fantastic. Kaye's little dog had a great time and was really trying to help. This was a great example of how groups can adopt a small patch and care for it, weeding, watering and keeping rubbish at bay. We were heartened to see a graffiti crew turn up a clean up a wall across the creek... a bit sad though as this was the brilliant canvas of an artistic endeavour from Strathmore Secondary College years ago. Maybe we could lobby to get it restored. Thanks to Vince Andreana (Moreland City Council) for providing the tools and taking away the weeds.



The mural that was vandalised, then painted over



Council staff regularly remove graffiti attacks from the wall

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**.

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

Sightings

Dennis Hocking had some great successes in the Jacana Wetland. He was really excited to come across a Latham's Snipe for the first time, or as we bird nerds like to call it a "lifer".

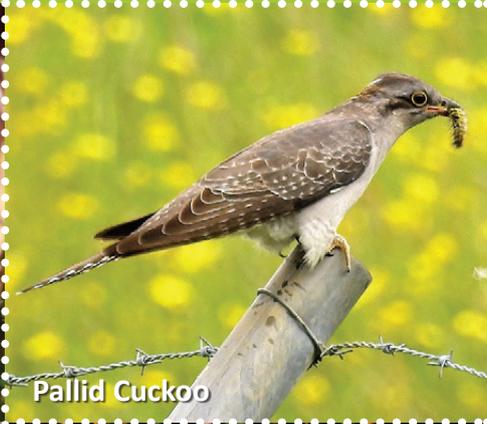
It was seen in the Northern Wetland at the

same time as a pair of Little Egrets in beautiful breeding plumage. A Glossy Ibis was found foraging alongside one of the protective nets and a Cattle Egret in breeding plumage was spotted in the North Jacana Wetland though Dennis said the bright sunlight didn't do its

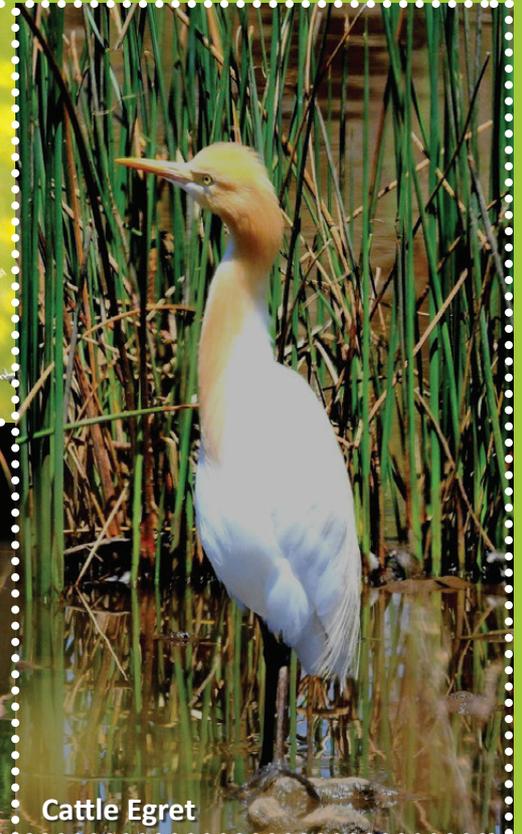
beautiful plumage justice. In the surrounding vegetation smaller birds continue to impress including a Juvenile Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo, an adult Pallid Cuckoo and a beautiful Sacred Kingfisher, and a very recent welcome return of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos.



Sacred Kingfisher



Pallid Cuckoo



Cattle Egret



Latham's Snipe



Little Egret



Juvenile Horsfield's
Bronze Cuckoo



Glossy Ibis



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo



Congratulations to our Tawny Frogmouth families

Six nests produced 5 sets of twins in Salmon Reserve, Westbreen Creek, Mascoma St near the school, Oak Park (photo by Dennis) and Boeing Reserve and a finally a single chick at Nursery Corner after a long wait

Did You Know?

Domestic cats are causing a significant threat to wild life along the Creek despite being well fed felines. This one was spotted stalking a Great Cormorant in Westmeadows and wasn't deterred by my presence. Throwing a stone into the water startled the Cormorant enough to go for a swim.



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.



Bi-Monthly Meetings

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

2020 Meeting dates:

- February 17 • April 20 • June 15 • August 17
- October 19 • December 21