



Ponderings

Seasonal newsletter of the
Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek
Summer 2022/23 | Issue 77

advocate educate interpret participate rehabilitate revegetate



Gavin Park Wetlands Opening



Summer News

It's been a very wet Spring, and the Creek has been running very high on a number of occasions, but no flooding such as they've had with the Maribyrnong River.

In this issue, we have our usual range of council news, featuring a number of activities including the Gavin Park Wetlands Opening and work at Nursery Corner and Brosnan Crescent.

Please note that Moreland is now Merri-bek Council and will be referred to as such from this day onward!

We also feature an Obituary for Allan Thomson, plus the President's report for the year.

There are also images of High Water, Tree Hollows, Motorbiking at the Trestle, Sightings and Spring plants from along the Creek.

David Widdowson, Editor

Thanks to Anna Lanigan, Kaye Oddie, Rachel Lopes, Nina Franceschi, Milly Burke and Lori Arthur for their assistance with the production of this issue.

Cover images by Anna Lanigan and Lori Arthur.

CONTENTS

(Click on page title)

Brosnan Crescent.....	3
Chain of Ponds News.....	4
Moonee Valley News.....	5-6
Nature Stewards.....	7
Merri-bek News.....	8-9
Waterwatch News.....	10
High Water	11
Home Sweet Hollows.....	12
Sightings.....	13
Spring along the MPC.....	14
Obituary - Allan Thomson	15
MPC History Page.....	16
FoMPC News.....	17

GUARDIAN STORAGE

Call 9374 1500

Get a quote

LOOKING FOR STORAGE?

Guardian Storage Essendon offers everything from boxes and packaging to business storage and household storage solutions. Want to know what our self storage costs? Call us to find out more about our full range of storage spaces for rent to see which of our storage options suit your storage rental needs.

Household storage



Need to declutter, moving house or renovating? Self storage is the perfect solution. From furniture to clothes our secure lock-up storage units ensure your items will be safe and sound.

Business storage



Guardian Storage Essendon provides flexible business and document storage solutions for storing your commercial stock and business records. Client files or excess and seasonal stock, we have a suitable storage solution to streamline your business and free up space.

Location / Trading hours

Guardian storage Essendon is located on Pascoe Vale Road, behind PETstock and Good Life Health Club.

Weekdays: 8:00am – 5:30pm
Weekends: 9:00am – 4:00pm

Project Update — Stage One

Works are continuing to upgrade a section of the existing footpath along the Moonee Ponds Creek side of Brosnan Crescent. Design changes have been implemented to raise the height of the shared user path to help protect the shallow root system of nearby trees, which has led to this part of the works being delayed so far. A section of the Brosnan Crescent pathway will have permanent safety fencing installed. To facilitate the installation of additional concrete paths, 14 trees have been removed along Brosnan Crescent. Between Brosnan Crescent and the waterway, 114 trees will be kept. The project will plant a total of 43,000 native plants within the project area.

What we are doing in Stage Two?

Works have had a delayed start due to significant rain that the catchment has received these past weeks. We are now beginning works to naturalise a 50 metre section upstream of Margaret Street bridge. The works will progress downstream of the bridge in later stages of the project. This work will involve the removal of concrete panels on the slopes of the creek and the installation of rock work. The use of rocks and boulders will achieve safety and stability and improved aesthetics of the area, helping to provide solidity to the surrounding embankment and reduce erosion.

During this work, base flow water in the creek will be diverted around the works downstream. To ensure necessary machinery is able to access the waterway, an access track will be created along the creek side of Oak Park Reserve. To facilitate the installation of the access track and to construct the future terrace and pond at a later stage, some vegetation will be removed. Upon testing, it was revealed that soil in the project area contains fragments of non-friable asbestos, which is lower risk compared to other types of asbestos, as it is more difficult to become airborne.

When are the works happening?

Weather dependent, works for these stages will begin in late-November to early-December. Stage 1 and stage 2 works are expected to finish February 2023.

- For the safety of everyone, some pathways will be closed during the works.
- Pedestrians and cyclists will be temporarily detoured along Mascoma and Odin Streets. Please see detour map below.
- A small site compound will be established at the corner of Main Street, next to the Reserve.
- There will be short-term increase in noise and dust. We will use a range of measures to reduce these impacts including screens and dust compression controls.





CHAIN OF PONDS

Transforming the Moonee Ponds Creek

By Rachel Lopes



Bandicoots on the Flightpath

On November 29, the Bandicoot Flight Path project team are hoping it's third time lucky for a tin painting and mat laying day with students from Greenvale Secondary College and Penleigh and Essendon Grammar. Fingers and toes are crossed for a sunny day! Thanks to the project team members and particularly Governance Group member and artist Catherine van Wilgenburg for her fabulous support and patience with the project so far.



A lower Moonee Ponds Creek focus group has formed to help deliver items on the Prospectus in the lower section of the creek. They'll have a particular focus on re-instating the shared path that has been built over. And working on an art trail, including painted pylons, similar to those further upstream (photographed by Tom Sevil.)



New Litter Lead

The Chain of Ponds Collaboration has welcomed Neil Sutton to the role of Litter Lead in September and Neil has hit the ground running! Neil is an environmental manager with experience working on waterway assessment and litter management projects, and is working part time (2.5 days) for 2 years. He's been visiting litter hotspots with Councils, building the *Litter Reduction Action Plan* with the Litter Working Group and speaking to Melbourne Water about the litter work underway as part of Greater Melbourne's *Healthy Waterways Strategies*, particularly with RMIT, so it's all systems go.

Neil is hoping to initially get local community involved in litter collection events in locations related to key litter hotspots within the Moonee Ponds Catchment and then develop source reduction projects, targeting litter hotspot areas, to address the root causes of litter across the creek and being flushed into the bay.

Our next community litter collection event is going to be held on **Westbreen Creek, at 10 – 12pm on the Sunday the 11th of December** in collaboration with Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) and Merri-bek Council. If you are keen to get involved please [register on the MCMC event page](#) or [email your details to Neil](#). For [event location click here](#).

Feel free to reach out directly [to Neil via email](#) if you'd like to get involved or have ideas you'd like to pursue, he is friendly and keen to hear from you. Thanks to Melbourne Water and Chain of Ponds' partners for funding the role, and Greater Western Water for hosting the role.

A second Chain of Ponds role is currently being advertised to deliver on the Cultural Heritage priorities of the Chain of Ponds Prospectus, and we're excited about the impact this role could have. Applications closed 23 November.

By Milly
Burke

Mulch anticipation for pedestrian hub

The Evans Street pedestrian hub is prepped in anticipation of beatification in 2023. Users of the busy Evans Street, Moonee Ponds pedestrian overpass to Hope Street, Brunswick West will have noticed some changes. After weed removal and mulching, the crews are now installing erosion controls, including coir logs and mesh. The site will be ready for planting in 2023. The plants will be a mix of local native species to support the ongoing improvements of habitat for the Moonee Ponds Creek, enhance usability of the trail and welcome pedestrians to the creek.

MVCC thanks trail users and local residents for their patience, as we have now completed these works.

Images below:

Changes at Evans Street, Moonee Ponds

June 2022

November 2022



Bumper planting season for 2022

Council had a bumper 2022, planting over 55,000 indigenous seedlings across Moonee Valley! Taking advantage of the extended planting conditions and with assistance from the Victorian Government's **More Trees for a Cooler Greener West**, this bumper planting season boosts local biodiversity, will help keep our trees healthy, and has a huge benefit for our local wildlife as well as our community's wellbeing.

Congratulations to all who rolled up their sleeves and helped. Over 8000 seedlings were planted by community at our planting days! We appreciate all your hard work and hope you enjoy visiting your seedlings to watch them grow.

Image above: Olivia's decorated tree guard celebrates trees and protects one of the 8000 seedlings planted by community in 2022.



Story Time in the Park at Boeing Reserve, Strathmore Heights along the Moonee Ponds Creek

Moonee Valley News (Continued)



Nature Book Week comes to Moonee Valley

Moonee Valley City Council's Conservation and Libraries crews teamed up with *The Wilderness Society* for a special **Nature Book Week!** On Saturday 3 September, Mayor Samantha Byrne and Nature Book Week Ambassador Dr Jen Martin hosted the national launch for the 2022 Nature Book Week. Throughout the week, MVCC's **Library on the Move** hosted nature-based special story times in our local parks and featured books from the shortlists for the Karajia and Environment Award for Children's Literature.

The first story time was hosted at Boeing Reserve, inviting residents to the special spot along our creek that many had not explored before. And yes, Librarian Sarah made a flower crown especially for the day (picture above)!

Best-practice environmental, nature-based storytelling is a low-cost, accessible tool to help our community:

- Connect to local nature,
- Inform and build science awareness of pro-environmental and climate actions,
- Support our young community members to avoid climate anxiety,
- Link local actions to global issues.

Moonee Valley Council staff have worked with the **Nature Book Week** team to develop their resources for Council libraries and early childhood practitioners. Our Libraries have also introduced unique search terms into the catalogue to help the community to access relevant and high-quality environmental stories. We aim for **Nature Book Week** to be an annual event in Moonee Valley and continue to build resources to extend the reach of this program.

To catch up on some of the talks and keep in the loop for Nature Book Week 2023, [visit this website](#).



Nursery Corner Update by Anna and Nina

Regular commuters along the shared trail beside the Moonee Ponds Creek at Strathmore North will have noticed the massive clean-up at the Nursery Corner site. Over the past months, the derelict buildings and infrastructure of the old nursery have been removed. The final weeks of the clean-up involved the excavation of mounds of rubble, metres deep, dumped by the previous tenant, despite the warnings to Council by locals at the time.



Every attempt has been made by the contractor, *Express Demolitions*, to recycle as much of the excavated material as possible, reducing the volume going to landfill. Wildlife Officers were on site during the building demolition, with the relocation of several possums to nearby trees. The size and potential of the site is now fully revealed and we look forward to its rehabilitation and the return to public open space.





Nature Stewards comes to the Moonee Ponds Creek

Merri-bek and Moonee Valley Councils are delighted to announce they will be co-hosting a **2023 Nature Stewards Program** - a guided discovery of our environment and how to get active for nature!

Join experts for field trips and talks over ten weeks. Hear from traditional owners and learn about *Caring for Country* together. Meet local experts and build knowledge and skills to support nature at home and locally through volunteering actions. Go on adventures to find out about the volcanoes under our suburbs, to understand how water and trees help us prepare for climate change, and discover more about your local creek and its wildlife.

Designed for a general audience and open to all over 18 years of age, this program does not require prior experience or qualifications. It is a great way to meet fellow nature enthusiasts, dip your toe into lifelong learning, find out about ways to help nature, or explore a possible career change.

When: Each Saturday (except Easter), starting March 25th and graduating June 3rd 2023.

Where: Sessions based from Glenroy Community Hub, Glenroy and Woodlands Park house, Essendon.

Cost: \$350 Full fee or \$90 Concession. Full scholarships available (and encouraged).

Applications open in December and close March 12th. For more information and to apply visit:

www.naturestewards.org.au.



Nature Stewards Waterwatch at Plenty Gorge (courtesy of Nature Stewards)



Merri-bek City Council

Gavin Park Wetlands Opening

by Charlotte Napper



Local community members, school students, Councillors and council staff came together to celebrate the opening of the recently completed wetlands at Gavin Park in Pascoe Vale.



Generations Celebrate

by Anna Lanigan

One of the nicest components of the Gavin Park Wetland Opening in Pascoe Vale was the inclusion of children from the local primary and secondary schools. In events usually punctuated by speeches from Indigenous Elders together with Local, State and Federal Government representatives (and these were great too), the lasting impression for me will be the wonderful artwork created by the children and displayed at the event.



A very moving Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremony was performed by Wurundjeri elder Uncle Ringo Terrick.



The wetland habitat will compliment the bushland plantings upstream in Joyce Reserve creating a re-emergence of some of the long lost beauty of Bluebell Dell as it was known in early settlement days when Lyrebirds made the creek their home.



Roving bandicoots Shazza and Razza provided entertainment, and visitors were invited to find out more about how the wetland functions with designers and council staff giving a tour.





The Wilding at Turnbull Court

Council is supporting a small community planting group in Brunswick West, 'The Wilding', working on a section of the creek corridor between Turnbull Court and the Citylink underpass. The group have done a fantastic job beautifying the area over Lockdown, but have faced a few challenges with large exotic trees constantly seeding into their patch. DELWP and Melbourne Water are assisting with removing dilapidated fencing and weedy vegetation through the site and Council will be supporting the group with plants and mulch during the planting season next year. If you'd like to get involved, please [contact Laurel Frank](#).



Gowanbrae – Path Connection

Council has engaged a contractor for the construction of a footpath link between the Moonee Ponds Creek trail and Seggan Circle in Gowanbrae. The link has been a long wait for the residents of Gowanbrae whilst we finalise a design that works with the challenging terrain and underground infrastructure. Given the slippery slope, we need a good spell of dry weather before works can commence so it is likely this won't be until early 2023 given current weather forecasts.



Kingsford Ulm Reserve Park Upgrade

Consultation was conducted earlier this year on a draft design for park upgrades at Kingsford Ulm Reserve. The concept design included new car parking, lighting, public toilets, shelter, BBQ and a proposal for an enclosed dog park. Support for the upgrades was generally positive, however, there were many concerns about anti-social behaviour and night-time noise and management of the gated entry is important. Final design work and costings are now underway.

There was a mixed response on the possible future dog park at the reserve. A separate consultation is currently underway for off-leash dog park options in the Glenroy area with three options open for voting until 9th December 2022.

See [Fenced dog parks in the north / Conversations Merri-bek](#)



Wet weather and long grass

Its been a long, wet spring and grass and weed growth in our parks has been excessive. Mowing parks when they are wet can have damaging impacts as vehicles sink in and churn up the ground or get bogged. We appreciate your patience and understanding whilst we try to get on top of this growth. Any extra hands weeding our plantings is always appreciated and we'd be happy to support any neighbourhood groups wanting to look after their local patch.

By Julia Cirillo

Water Quality Monitoring

MCMC Waterwatch had a busy early spring working with the local community collecting information on the water quality of the Moonee Ponds Creek. We focused on the area close to Strathmore North PS. Our aim was to get some baseline data of the current water quality of the Moonee Ponds at this site before channel works were begun and where possible, to involve the local community in this data collection.

Strathmore North PS Year 4 science students completed water testing in early October. Although the salinity (720 EC) wasn't as high as other dates and pH was within normal limits, nutrient levels and turbidity (the muddiness of the water) were all high.

Brunswick Cubs completed water testing in late October. Salinity was very high (2200 EC!) as were nutrients and turbidity.

This water quality data has been loaded onto the Waterwatch Victoria data portal which can be accessed here, searching Moonee Ponds Creek using the site code search tool on the left hand side: http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au/water_data_portal.php

MCMC Waterwatch staff completed an aquatic macroinvertebrate (waterbug) study in early October. The results showed very little waterbug diversity, only 6 taxa, when over 20 taxa is considered ecologically healthy. This low range of taxa and the taxa being all pollution tolerant, indicate that the creek is badly impacted by the low range of riparian and in-stream habitats.

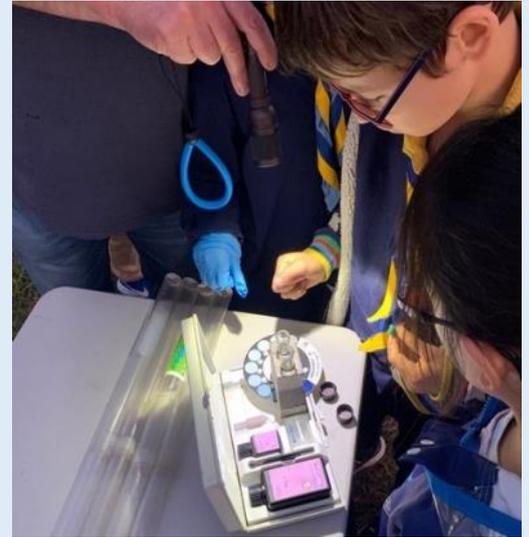


Stormwater pollution is also likely to have had an impact. This waterbug report can be downloaded on the MCMC citizen science WQ summaries page: <https://www.mcmc.org.au/environmental-education/waterwatch/waterwatch-water-quality-summaries>

Despite the unhealthy (but not surprising) ecological results, the Brunswick Cubs and Strathmore North PS students loved the Moonee Ponds Creek sample collection, testing and discussion on the results. They all want to continue sampling and testing once the channel works is complete. Hopefully, we will find better water testing results and more diversity of water bug life.

The Moonee Ponds at Strathmore Waterwatch community monitoring was funded by Melbourne Water, Merri-bek City Council and Moonee Valley City Council.

Waterwatch & Rapid Response to Litter after Rainfall Coordinator: juliacirillo@mcmc.org.au





High Water!

Images by Anna Lanigan, Joanne Dietrich and Kelvin Thomson



Home Sweet Hollows

by Anna Lanigan



One of the pleasures of my Spring bird counts is coming across occupied nesting hollows. There is often some spirited competition between competing pairs for a scarce resource.



Good candidate trees can also be found in our smaller parks, such as Woodlands Park and Salmon Reserve in Essendon. One threat to occupancy by our native birds is the invasion of hollows by feral honey bees and the introduced Common Mynas. These are also sadly found in most of my count sites and any remedy to deter them would be welcome!



Trees need to reach maturity for hollows to develop and we are so lucky to have such wonderful habitat in our catchment, especially the protected areas of Woodlands Historic Park and Napier Park, Strathmore.



iNaturalist Update

The Moonee Ponds Creek/iNaturalist now has over 16,800 observations, covering all natural flora and fauna. Go to: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/moonee-ponds-creek-wildlife>

A banner for the Moonee Ponds Creek Wildlife project on iNaturalist. It features a photograph of two grey birds perched on a branch. The banner includes the project name, a description of the project's goal, and a link to the project page. It also shows the number of members (15) and a link to the project journal.



Striated Pardalotes by Andrew Haysom

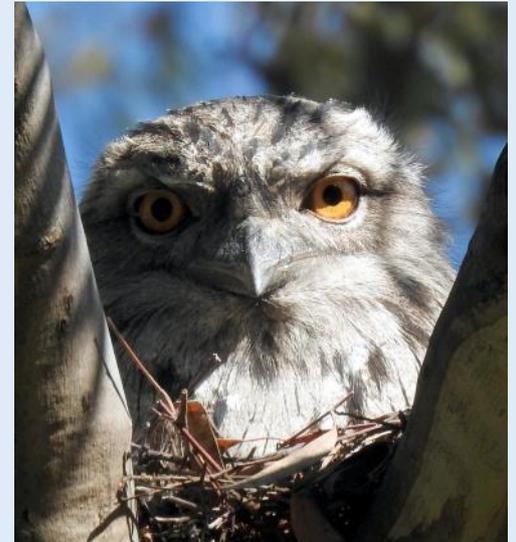


Sacred Kingfisher by Andrew

Sightings



Tawny Chick by Maurice Austin



Tawny Frogmouth by Anna Lanigan



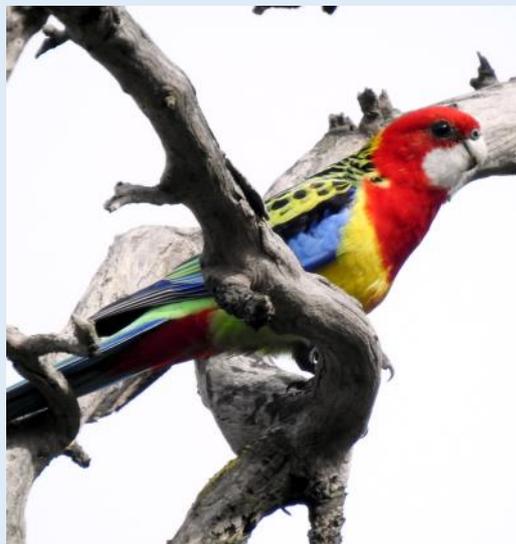
Pobblebonk Frog by Andrew



Kookaburra with Frog by Laurelle Dumesny



Pobblebonk Frog by Andrew



Eastern Rosella by Anna



Superb Fairywren by Maurice

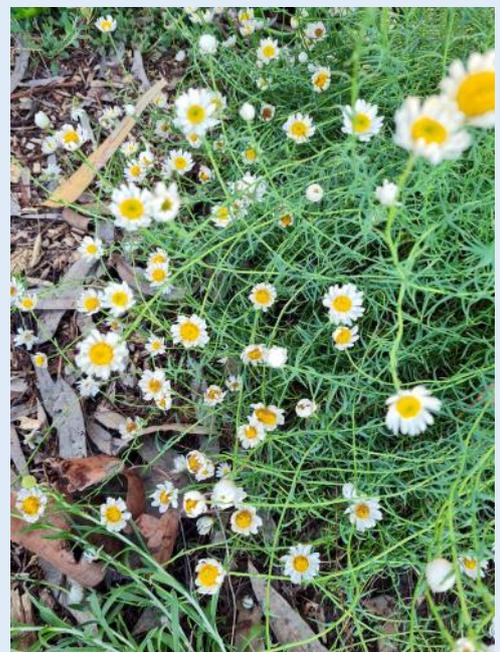


White-winged Chough by Anna



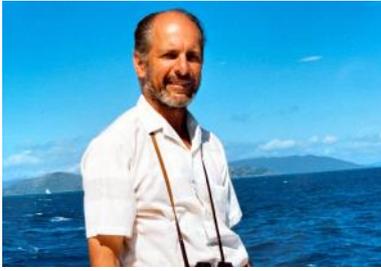
Spring!

Images by Nina



Obituary — Allan Thomson

by Kelvin Thomson



Allan Roy Thomson was born in Hamilton in 1931 and passed away peacefully at the *Edith Bendall Lodge* in Pascoe Vale in September. He grew up on a farm at Mooralla and moved to Pascoe Vale in Melbourne in 1954 with his new wife Dorothy.



Allan was a foundation member of the *Moonee Ponds Creek Association* in 1989, now the *Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek*. He brought to the Association a wealth of experience in growing, planting, and maintaining Australian native plants, and in community group activism to protect and enhance public open space, particularly along creek valleys.



Allan was the Secretary and driving force behind the *Pascoe Vale Naturalists* from 1972 to 2000. He was a Founding Member and Treasurer of the *Merri Creek Co-ordinating Committee* from 1976 to 1987. In 1984, he was a co-author of *Plants of the Merri Merri: a Guide to the Indigenous Vegetation of the Merri Creek Valley and Melbourne's Northern Suburbs*. He served as President of the *Keep Coburg Beautiful Committee*, was a volunteer with the *Friends of Organ Pipes National Park*, and was engaged in numerous lobbying and campaigning activities to create and expand Victorian National Parks.

In the early days, before native plants became fashionable, Dad was something of a native plant urban guerrilla, planting them in parks and open spaces by the light of the moon. The Council wouldn't allow people to replace the introduced street trees in our street. One night Dad accidentally reversed his car over the tree in front of our house, and felt compelled to replace it personally with a native tree.



Without gainsaying the important contributions made by others, the *Pascoe Vale Naturalists Club* was Dad's show. He ran it for 30 years, and can pretty much take a bow for everything it achieved during that time.



The idea of "whole of catchment" management has been accepted practice for years now for the Moonee Ponds Creek and other urban waterways, but it was not always so. Councils managed their own section of the creek without consulting with their neighbours, or worrying about the downstream consequences of their actions. Dad was in fact the first person to foresee the need to have Councils co-ordinate their work along the Merri Creek. He successfully lobbied Coburg, Brunswick, Fitzroy, Northcote and Preston Councils, and the Merri Creek Co-ordinating Committee was formed.

Dad was very hands on, leading by example. During World War 2 the military had dumped waste along a bank of the Westbreen Creek, one of the Moonee Ponds Creek's tributaries. Dad organised a number of working bees to remove the metal waste so that the bank could be revegetated. With a trailer down beside the creek, volunteers were loading rubbish for the tip. A neighbour dashed over screaming, "You can't dump stuff here, people are trying to clean up this creek!"

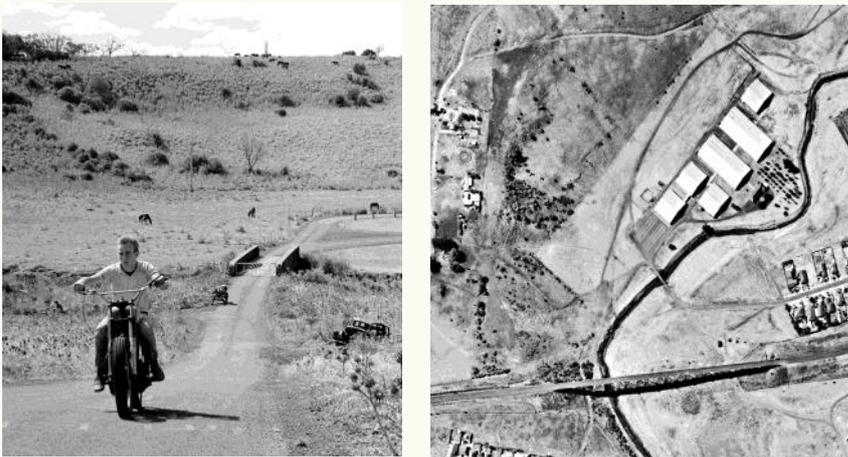
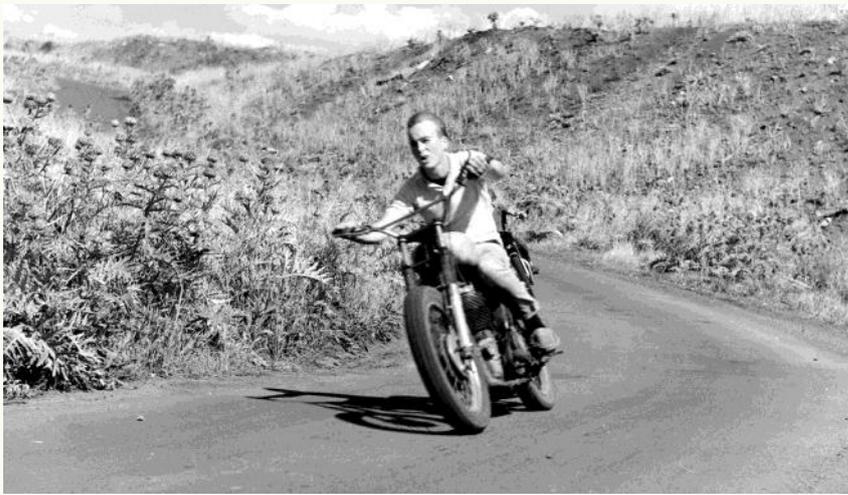
Dad was not just a local activist, he was able to see the bigger picture and engage with it. The Little Desert and Lower Glenelg battles of 1969/1970 secured the future of those important areas. They also led to the establishment of the Land Conservation Council, which examined public land right across Victoria in minute detail, and ended up recommending large increases in Victoria's national park estate. Dad, who had become politicized by these conservation battles, read these lengthy reports and made submissions on many of them.



His great energy, passion, and modesty were inspirational to many others, and played a key role in the protection and transformation of the open space and waterways of Melbourne's North-West, including the Moonee Ponds Creek.

RIP Dad, we are all in your debt!

Those of us who were around in the 1960s and 1970s will remember what a haven for motor cyclists the area around the Trestle bridge was! The photos below are also a reminder of the scotch thistles and the RK Morgan factory and bridge (black and white images from 1967, colour images from now). Images at right show the changes in the aerial view over the years.



Changes in the area over time:



1951



1966



1979



1989



2001



2022



Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc

PO Box 54, ESSENDON 3040

www.mooneepondscreek.org.au

friends@mooneepondscreek.org.au

FoMPC News

Secretary and Treasurer Still Needed

We are still searching for a new Treasurer and Secretary, with both Vince (Treasurer) and Alison (Secretary) standing down at the AGM. Please contact us at the above email address if you are interested in filling either of these positions.

President's Report by John Kavanagh

This group – first formed in 1989 – continues to be an important, well respected voice on local environment matters. This has been the legacy of so many hardworking members over a span of 33 years. It is on their shoulders that we stand.

At each year's Annual General Meeting it is appropriate to reflect on those former members who have passed during the previous year. I'm sure there are many that I am personally unaware of, but I still acknowledge and thank them for their contribution. Any organisation needs many who quietly go about their business helping the organisation in so many varied ways and all efforts are greatly appreciated. I do, however, think it would be remiss of me not to single out the passing of Mr Allan Thomson OAM.

Allan has been referred to as the father of the Friends of the Moonee Pond Creek. Of course his environmental activities were not limited to this group. He had a life time of advocacy and plain hard work in a myriad of environmental pursuits. We are fortunate that he passed this love onto his children and this group has been so well served by their efforts as well.

President's Report (continued)

After years of campaigning, this year has seen the beginning of the naturalisation of a section of the Moonee Ponds Creek. I went past today and it's looking magnificent. I'm really pleased with Melbourne Water's efforts and with the funding announcements made earlier this year, it's looking really positive that more of the creek will be naturalised in the not-too-distant future.

With Covid restrictions being eased, we have seen the return of clean-up, planting and weeding days. I find it so satisfying when I see children attending planting days with their parents or grandparents. Our general meetings have returned to face-to-face meetings and I know this has been well received.

There are tasks that require the constant attention of members and there are a few that I would like to make special mention of:

* Our Facebook page – thank you to Anna, Nina and Zoe - your efforts are invaluable in getting both important information and beautiful images of our flora and fauna out to so many – thank you so much.

* Rachel Lopes and all involved in the work of 'The Chain of Ponds' and the work you do.

* It seems like the creek needs advocating for all the time; from making submissions to the four Councils which encompass the creek to the various statutory authorities responsible for all aspects of the creek. Sometimes this important work can seem tedious but there is no doubt that the creek has benefited from this. I particularly want to thank Kaye Oddie, Nina Franceschi and Anna Lanigan for this important work.

* To the committee who have worked so hard this year I am so grateful. To Frank Kinnersley, our Vice President, thank you for being on the end of the phone with a moment's notice. Thank you for the quiet way in which you complete complex tasks, thanks for maintaining the membership records and hundreds of other jobs you perform with a minimum of fuss. To Alison Cook, our secretary, the FoMPC formally thanks you for all your efforts in the last 18 months. And then we come to Vince Aitkin, our retiring Treasurer of 18 years. How can one express in a few words what a debt this group owes you?

* Finally thank you to every member of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek. Thank you all!

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

Help protect and enhance the Moonee Ponds Creek's natural environment. For information and to join, go to mooneepondscreek.org.au and complete the membership form, or write to PO Box 54, Essendon VIC

CALENDAR	Event and Location:	Contact/ Link
Monday, December 12 th , 6.30pm	FoMPC meeting, at Sam Merrifield Library	mooneepondscreek.org.au

Your Contributions to Ponderings are welcome!
Please send your images and stories to fompc.ponderings@gmail.com