



Ponderings

SEASONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
FRIENDS OF MOONEE PONDS CREEK

SPRING 2026 | ISSUE 92

advocate

educate

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate

MOONEE VALLEY
CITY COUNCIL

Update



National Tree Day 2026

Moonee Valley City Council's National Tree Day community planting event was co-hosted by Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek at Boeing Reserve on Sunday 26 July. Thank you to everyone who came along and joined in our biggest tree-planting day ever. More than 550 people joined us and rolled up their sleeves to help plant over **10,000 seedlings!**

Thank you to Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek for helping to make the day such a success. Thank you also to the other community groups who joined us to create such a wonderful and fun event.

Moonee Valley Sustainability helped give away more than 500 seedlings for participants to plant at home. Moonee Valley Beekeepers shared the wonderful world of honey bees. Many local Scouts joined together to host a knot-tying workshop, and Rotary brought their BBQ to keep us all well fed.

Ponderings

Send articles to: fompc.ponderings@gmail.com



Rotary members with their BBQ



Planters were serenaded by local musician Kaytlyn Johnson. This year, we decorated recycled paper tree guards. These are a new style of guard for us, so we will be watching closely to see how well they hold up.



This planting is a big contribution to one of our largest 'deep green' areas along the creek before the corridor narrows as it heads into the city.

We will continue to care for the seedlings as we wait for them to grow. We will water them and remove guards as needed. Sometimes it can take a few years to see the plants really take off. That's OK! They are putting more growth into their roots

than their canopies, which will make them healthier in the long run.

Pop past to watch them grow and check out some of the beautiful tree-guard creations made by volunteers on the planting day. Please just make sure to keep clear of Gus' territory during swooping season. He patrols the area between the new planting and up the hill towards Mascoma Street.



Boeing Reserve swale

The National Tree Day plantings were along the new swale at Boeing Reserve. In 2025, Moonee Valley City Council installed the swale and rain-garden to capture and filter storm-water before it reaches Moonee Ponds Creek. The swale slows and filters water while providing a range of micro-habitats for plants and animals.

During moderate rains a storm-water pit at the top of Boeing Reserve surges with storm-water and overflow into the park. Low storm-water flows will continue to be conveyed via the storm-water pipe network, that are now also connected to the rain-garden.

A swale is a shallow channel designed to manage surface water runoff. Plants, rocks and other habitat elements help to

filter and slow water flow as well as create a diversity of micro-habitats.

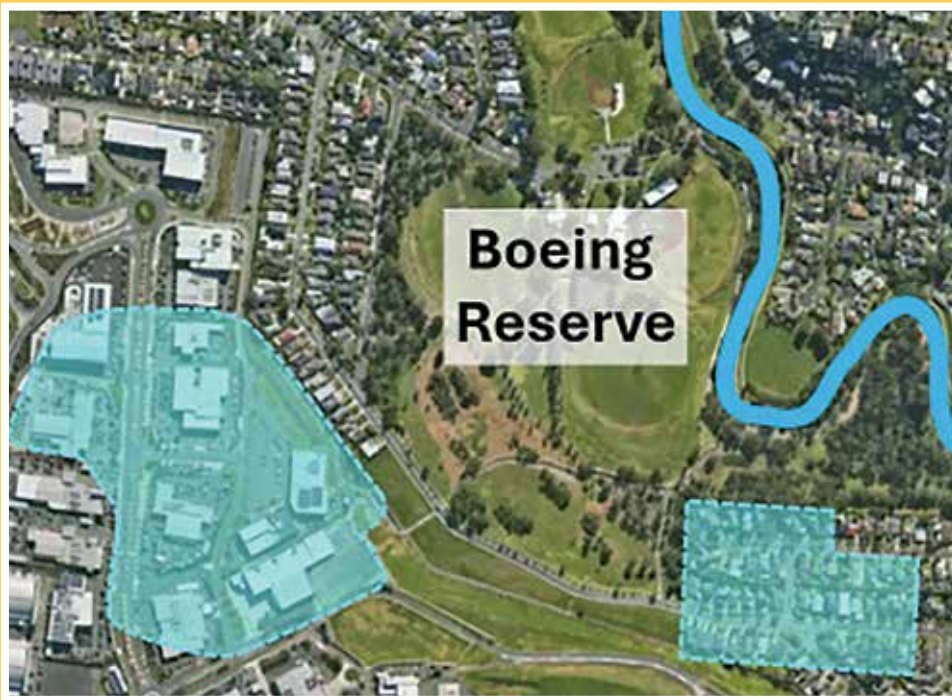
The rain-garden collects and filters these flows. Water in the rain-garden percolates through a base of sandy filter media before being collected in perforated pipes. The water then flows into a pit, before continuing to the Moonee Ponds Creek.

The rain-garden is estimated to reduce storm-water pollutant loads to the Creek of:

- 8700kg of total suspended solids
- 14kg of total phosphorous
- 84kg of total nitrogen

Picture: The main components of the swale system in Boeing Reserve.





Picture: Catchment areas of swale. The larger catchment area of storm water is within Essendon Fields and is 14 hectares. The smaller catchment area is from a residential area and is 3.5 hectares.

The rain-garden also provides still-water habitat alongside the creek, which is important for many animals, including frogs.

Historical records show that Growling Grass Frogs (*Ranoidea raniformis*) have occurred along the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor. Listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act, these frogs rely on permanent ponds to breed. The new rain-garden creates an opportunity for Growling Grass Frogs to return to the area.

The swale and rain-garden's different moisture levels support a diversity of plants and animals, helping to strengthen local biodiversity and create a more resilient natural system. Below is a table of the plant species planted into each micro-habitat.

If you are creating a wildlife friendly garden, consider using some of these for areas of different moisture levels. The rain-garden has the highest moisture levels, the swale base is dry with periodic inundation, and the swale edge has the driest soil conditions.

		Rain-garden Swale base Swale edge		
<i>Acacia acinacea</i>	Gold-dust wattle			✓
<i>Acacia implexa</i>	Lightwood wattle			✓
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge wattle			✓
<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>	Drooping sheoak			✓
<i>Amphibromus nervosus</i>	Swamp wallaby grass	✓		
<i>Atriplex semibaccata</i>	Berry saltbush	✓		✓
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia			✓
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria	✓		✓
<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>	River Bottlebrush	✓		✓
<i>Calocephalus lacteus</i>	Milky beauty-heads			✓
<i>Carex appressa</i>	Tall sedge	✓	✓	
<i>Cassinia longifolia</i>	Long-leaf Cassinia			✓
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Yellow buttons			✓
<i>Correa glabra</i>	Rock Correa			✓

* Table continued on next page

<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Billy buttons	✓	✓
<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	Black-anther flax-lily		✓
<i>Einadia nutans</i>	Nodding saltbush	✓	✓
<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i>	Ruby saltbush	✓	✓
<i>Gahnia sieberiana</i>	Red-fruit saw-sedge	✓	✓
<i>Goodenia ovata</i>	Hop Goodenia	✓	✓
<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purple coral pea	✓	✓
<i>Indigofera australe</i>	Austral indigo	✓	✓
<i>Juncus amabilis</i>	Hollow rush	✓	✓
<i>Juncus procerus</i>	Tall rush	✓	
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>	Wooly teatree	✓	
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiky-headed mat-rush	✓	✓
<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>	Swamp paperbark		✓
<i>Mentha australis</i>	River mint	✓	
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	Weeping grass		✓
<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>	Creeping Boobialla	✓	✓
<i>Olearea ramulose</i>	Twiggy daisy-bush		✓
<i>Poa labillardieri</i>	Common tussock grass	✓	✓
<i>Poa poiformis</i>	Blue tussock grass	✓	✓
<i>Pycnosaurus globosus</i>	Drumsticks		✓
<i>Rhagodia spinescens</i>	Hedge salt bush	✓	✓
<i>Rytidosperma caespitosum</i>	Wallaby grass		✓
<i>Senna artemisioides</i>	Silver Cassia		✓
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Kangaroo grass		✓

Spring reminders

As the weather warms up this is a reminder that snakes will be more active. Please help keep everyone safe by keeping to paths and mown grass areas. Keep pets under supervision when outside.

Protective bird parents may also be swooping to keep perceived threats away from their young. If you encounter a swooping bird, please keep clear of the area for a few weeks to help reduce stress to our wildlife. You can check for and report swooping birds in your area via www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/managing-wildlife/swooping-birds

We will also see fledgling birds about. Fledgling birds have recently left the nest and will still be under parental supervision while they gain their flight licence. Sometimes they do need help, other times they are better off being left alone. If you see a fledgling that you think needs assistance, contact Wildlife Victoria on 8400 7300. For more information visit www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/learn/cause-of-injury-post/baby-birds

What's on

Nature Book Week – from Saturday 10 October - Join us for special Storytime in the Park. Check out our Library calendar or look up all events at: www.wilderness.org.au/environment-award-for-childrens-literature/nature-book-week

Youth - Grassroots Group – activities keep an eye on the Valley Youth page or sign up to the mailing list. www.mvcc.vic.gov.au/youth/

Wildlife Friendly Garden Giveaway Pop-ups – keep an eye on our socials and event calendar for pop-ups near you. www.mvcc.vic.gov.au/events-calendar

As we launch into spring there is a host of citizen science events to contribute to:

The Aussie Bird Count from Monday 19 October: <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>

Australian Pollinator Count from Monday 9 November: <https://www.australianpollinatorweek.org.au/count/>

Great Southern BioBlitz Friday 27 to Monday 30 November: <https://www.greatsouthernbioblitz.org/>

Ponderings

Send articles to: fompc.ponderings@gmail.com

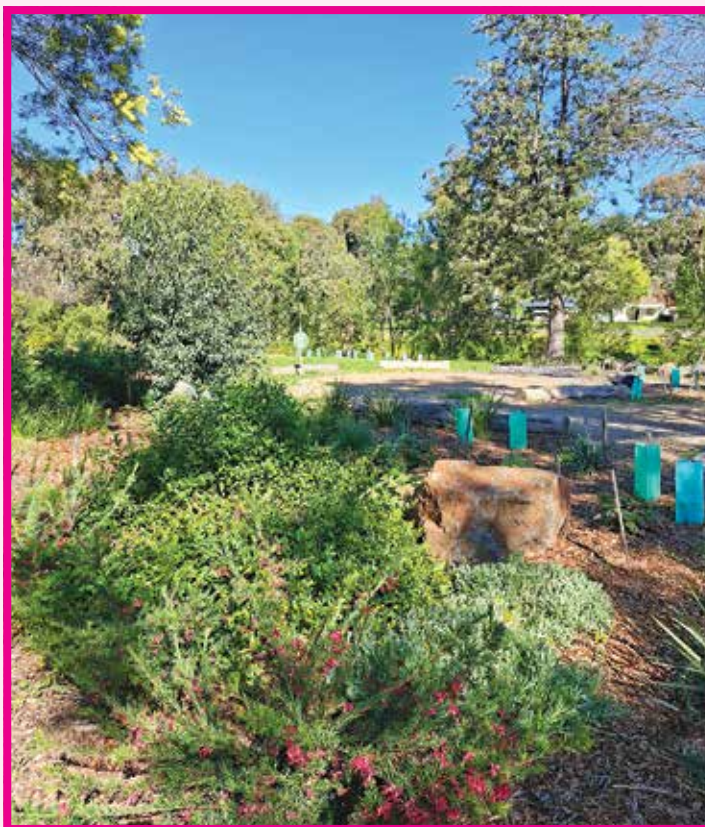
John Street Reserve, Oak Park

By Carolyn Leyton

Some photos taken recently of the plantings over the past couple of years. Towards the end of August, the Acacias and Grevilleas are stand outs.

It is great to see people using and enjoying this open space and the connectivity with the Creek and adjoining suburbs that it enables.

Another fine example of the collaboration between Merri-bek Council, Melbourne Water and Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek that has improved everyday life for locals and others.



Casual SNAPS



Mulch spreading event the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek did at the Turnbull Crescent site in Brunswick West.



*Flemington Adopt a Creek members.
Photos by: Kelvin Thomson*

Walk, talk and gawk – birdlife on Moonee Ponds Creek

Years of planting and restoration have been worth it as the local bird-life gives creek restoration a tick of approval. Join us as we walk a section of the creek trail in Oak Park, spotting roosting Tawny frogmouths, nesting Willie wagtails, Chestnut teal herding their ducklings to safety and whatever else we can find.

Join local bird enthusiast and Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek member Greg Hunt on Sunday October 18, timed for peak bird activity. Gather outside Francis Winifred Café on the corner of Winifred St and Francis St from 8 am (café opens at 8 am on Sundays) for an 8.30 start, finishing back at the café at 10.30.

Dress for the weather and bring binoculars if you have them Please RSVP to gmaxwellhunt@gmail.com so we know how many copies of the handout to prepare. Numbers limited to 20.



Reimagining Your Moonee Ponds Creek

We're transforming a second section of the Moonee Ponds Creek into a more natural and enjoyable community space, and improving waterway health.

Starting from the end of the project site that we completed last year, we'll be naturalising the creek up to the Pascoe Vale Road bridge. We'll be doing this by:

- Replacing the concrete with rock-work and vegetation to slow down flows, and to give the creek a more natural look and feel
- Planting native trees and shrubs next to the creek to provide habitat, shade and cooling
- Making improvements to shared paths to meet current design and safety standards
- Extending the cultural immersive trail - the Wilami Wunmabil Trail - through this zone.

Melbourne Water is leading the design and delivery of the project on behalf of the Chain of Ponds Collaboration Group, and in partnership with Merri-bek City Council, Moonee Valley City Council, Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action (DEECA), and Wurundjeri Corporation.

This second stage of the project is jointly funded by the Australian Government's Urban Rivers and Catchments Program and Melbourne Water.

Detailed design work underway

Following positive feedback from the local community on

the concept design for Stage 2 (which we shared in June-July 2026), we're now progressing to the detailed design stage, where we'll work through all the practical details needed before construction can begin.

This involves finalising the design elements and how the design will practically work including the engineering, hydrology requirements, safety and accessibility features, landscaping, and environmental considerations.

All the community feedback gathered so far helps to inform these decisions.

What happens next?

By the end of the detailed design phase, we'll have a set of plans and specifications that we'll use to obtain the approvals and permits we need, and prepare for construction.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2027, once we have all the planning permits and approvals, and we've appointed our delivery partner who will be completing the works on our behalf.

Moonee Ponds Creek Trail upgrade

In addition to the important work of naturalising the creek, we'll also be upgrading the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail along this next section. The asphalt will be replaced with a wider concrete path, and a full barrier fence will be installed along the entire length of the Stage 2 project to keep cyclists and pedestrians safe.

TURNBULL COURT 'ELBOW' PROJECT 2025 - 2026

What a 'good news' story!

By Kaye Oddie



In the beginning an abandoned patch of land abutting the Creek and hidden behind old mesh fencing and Madeira vine.



... that 'magically' got cleared!

Merri-bek Council came to the party with a community participation grant to remove nasties: boxthorn, prickly pear and exotic privet trees, spray out the site for weeds, make paths, place logs...



.... and install a platform seat.



In the meantime, a landscape plan was drawn up, plants were ordered, grasses propagated from seed and new Eucalypt trees grown on.



Council supplied loads of mulch for enthusiastic locals to spread in a mulching bee.



Lightwood trees were planted along the steep embankment:



Over 50 volunteers in total helped with the mulching, tree planting and main planting days.



Marker stakes for plants





COMMUNITY PLANTING BEE

SUNDAY 5 JULY

10 AM - 12 NOON

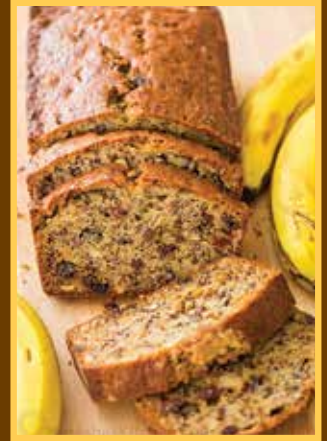
HERE AT THE 'ELBOW'
TURNBULL COURT

ALL WELCOME

PLANT LIST

Over 500 indigenous plants:

- *Eucalypts*
- *Acacias*
- *Callistemons*
- *Other shrubs*
- *Lower storey plants*
- *Ground covers*
- *Grasses*



Banana cakes for morning teas made by little chef Matilda!



Melbourne University map tracks native water mammal *Rakali* in waterways

By Shaun McDonald, ABC news. Reproduced here from the ABC News website.

A new University of Melbourne mapping project has plotted more than 700 Rakali sightings across Greater Melbourne.



It shows the native, otter-like water mammal is quietly thriving throughout Victoria.

What's next?

People who see a Rakali are encouraged to report it to the Australian Platypus Conservancy.

A native water mammal once dismissed as a "water rat" is quietly thriving in Melbourne's waterways, according to a new University of Melbourne mapping project.

Conservation biologist Kylie Soanes said the Rakali was sighted more than 700 times across Greater Melbourne, with hotspots at the St Kilda breakwater, Southbank and Coburg Lake.



The 746 Rakali sightings show various hotspots around Melbourne's waterways. (Supplied: Emily Fitzgerald)

Rakali have long been difficult to track as they slipped or chewed their way out of monitoring gear.

The new data shows how well they have adapted to city life.

They have turned up in drains, fountains, ponds and rivers across the state.

No average rat

At first glance, a Rakali can look remarkably similar to an invasive black or brown rat.



A Rakali's white-tipped tail and golden belly are among the easiest ways to tell it apart from invasive rats. (iNaturalist: Snow Dennis, CC BY-NC 4.0)

But it was recognised as Australia's most underrated animal of 2025. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-15/wildlife-blog-15-august-2025/105651126>

"People just think, 'Ew, get rid of it,'" Dr Soanes said.

She mentioned the switch from water rat to Rakali came out of a push in the 1990s to shed the stigma that lumped native species in with pest rodents.

Australia has more than 50 native species of rats and mice, many of which were trapped as pests by people who mistook them for vermin.

The name Rakali, from the language of the Ngarrindjeri people of the Lower Murray, was adopted in 1995 to give the animal a rebrand.

Dr Soanes said the Rakali was hardly a pest, and did the city a favour.

"What the Rakali have done, which is incredible, is they're able to take down black and brown rats in cities," she said, referencing footage from Sydney of a Rakali squaring off against another rat.

"They're good at keeping the nasty rats away."

The footage came from University of Sydney research led by Professor Peter Banks, whose motion-sensing camera captured the first documented evidence of a Rakali ambushing a black rat on the foreshore of Sydney Harbour.

Researchers say the native swimmer, which also happens to be the largest of Australia's native rodents, could offer a natural way to control introduced rats.

The Rakali has been nicknamed Australia's answer to the otter.

Water-repellent fur and partially webbed hind feet allow it to thrive in water environments, while its streamlined body and long, rudder-like tail make it a strong and graceful swimmer.

Ferocious hunter with table manners

Rakali are known to be opportunistic predators and scavengers.

The native species shares the rocks at the St Kilda breakwater with the famous little penguin colony.

They mostly hunt marine invertebrates and crustaceans, but researchers have set up motion-sensing trail cameras and caught them preying on penguin eggs or chicks.

For all its skill as a predator, the Rakali has a surprisingly refined side.

"They're very polite eaters," Dr Soanes said.

"You won't find them raiding your pantry".

When a Rakali takes down a fish or a crayfish, it carries the meal to a flat rock or log, dissects it neatly, and leaves behind a tidy pile of bones and shells.

"That's one of the ways you can find them," Dr Soanes said.

"You'll see these really strange piles and collections of bones. And that's actually the Rakali's leftovers from the night before".



Rakali thrive near water where fish make up a key part of their diet. (iNaturalist: Ron Greer, CC BY-NC 4.0)

The Rakali have become precision surgeons and are one of only a handful of animals that can safely eat a cane toad, which is toxic at all stages of their life.

Rakali know how to carefully cut out the toxic glands and eat only the safe parts.

How to spot one

The mapping project is part of a University of Melbourne series called Map of the Month.

Its first project tracked vital highways of native bee species.

The most recent Rakali map is published on the university's Pursuit website.

Water is the place to start for people who want to see one in the wild.

Rakali need to climb in and out to hunt, so can be found on the edges, concrete steps, stepping stones and little islands, especially where urban rivers are hard to exit.

Dr Soanes said the range of places had surprised her, from ponds in the Botanic Gardens to fountains, artificial creeks and floating litter traps.

Rakali were long assumed to be nocturnal, but sightings on the map have come in at all hours.

Dr Soanes said dawn and dusk were still the easiest times to find one when the water was calmer and their movement could be seen through ripples.

In the water, the main giveaway will be a white tip on its long tail. A shimmer of orange on its tummy has earned the Rakali its scientific name, *Hydromys chrysogaster*, or "golden-bellied water mouse".

Williamstown and Werribee had some of the highest numbers of sightings on the map, but they can be spotted as far out as Ballarat and beyond.

The project focused on Melbourne, but Dr Soanes said the animals were common across most of Australia, thinning out only in arid areas.



Rakali are found across much of Australia, inhabiting rivers, lakes, wetlands and coastal waterways. (ABC News Breakfast)

What we're trying to do with this mapping project is show people how many amazing native animals live all around us," she said.

"I can guarantee you that if you live near a river or a creek anywhere across Melbourne, there's probably a Rakali in it."

People who see a Rakali are encouraged to report it to the Australian Platypus Conservancy, which tracks the species due to its shared habitat with platypuses.

Before appearing on News Breakfast, about 50 people had fed sightings into the map.

Among them were fishers who had watched Rakali steal their catch and dog walkers along the creeks.

Dr Soanes said many more had been in touch since and they had been able to add an area near St Leonards due to new reports.

She said she was still waiting on her own first sighting.

"I've seen zero Rakali," she said, laughing. "But that's why I made the map."



Community Planting Day at Kernan Street Reserve Pascoe Vale

Austin Crescent, Kernan Street and Tate Street project on track

Upgrading works for Tate Street Park have been completed and the reserve is re-opened as of Thursday 27 August 2026.

The park features nature play, seating and native garden beds.

There is now a fresh new path connection from the rear of Tate Park, extending along the Moonee Ponds Creek and taking you through to the nearby Kernan Street reserve.

A community planting day at Kernan Street Reserve was hugely successful with over 1500 plants being established

Council is continuing with the designs for new wetlands at Jacana Valley in Glenroy and a swale through Austin Crescent Reserve, Pascoe Vale. These projects will deliver improved storm water management, water quality and habitat for the Moonee Ponds Creek, and create a cooler, greener and more climate-resilient neighbourhood.

The designs can be reviewed on the Conversations Merri-bek website:

<https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/wetlands>



Council staff finishing off nature play items at Tate Street Park Pascoe Vale

Sightings

around the creek



Photos taken by **Maurice Austin** and reproduced with permission



Handy websites and Facebook links

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek/
Webpage: mooneepondscreek.org.au

Friends of Merri Creek:

friendsofmerricreek.org.au/

Friends of Edgars Creek:

foec.org.au

Friends of Steele Creek Facebook:

facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekInc

Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley:

fmvonline.com

Woodlands Historic Park:

whp.altervista.org/

Victorian Indigenous Plants Co-op (VINC):

<https://www.vinc.net.au>

Chain of Ponds:

<https://chainofponds.org>

Contact us if you have any other links to share

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 1092, Moonee Ponds, Victoria 3039.**

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

Diary Dates

Last minute cancellations and changes will be posted to our [Facebook](#) page.

Date/Time	What	Where
Sunday 18 October, 2026 8:00am - 10:00am	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek RSVP: gmaxwellhunt@gmail.com	Walk, Talk and Gawk Francis Winifred Cafe. Cnr Winifred and Francis Street, Oak Park
Monday 19 October, 2026 6:30pm	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek general, and Annual General Meeting (AGM)	Sam Merrifield Library, 762 Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds
Monday 14 December, 2026 6:30pm	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek general meeting	Sam Merrifield Library, 762 Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds

FOR ALL MEMBERS WHO ATTEND SCHEDULED PLANTING DAYS, PLEASE BRING GLOVES AND DRINKING WATER, WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR. ALL CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

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

Last minute cancellations and changes will be posted to our Facebook: facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek/

HUME, MERRI-BEK AND MOONEE VALLEY CITY COUNCILS SOMETIMES PLACE PLANTING DAYS ON THEIR WEBSITE. THEY MAY PREFER YOU TO REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE TO ASSIST WITH RESOURCING AND CATERING.