



Tanjenong Tales

FFDC Newsletter July 2021

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President's Report - Welcome to the 65th edition.

It was with great sadness here at FFDC that we learnt that founding member and past president for FFDC, Barry Robinson, and his wife Margaret, passed away in May. Barry was a very well respected and passionate member of FFDC for a great many years, and held in high esteem by all who knew him. Barry will be greatly missed by all who knew him, and we extend our thoughts and condolences to Barry and Margaret's family and their many friends. We continue to be agile in response to the changing COVID situation and will plan and prepare for events for 2021 with that attitude. Our World Environment/Rotary 100th Anniversary planting has had to be postponed twice now due to lockdowns, and we hope to be scheduling a new date shortly for this celebration.

We have initiated a strategic review, which will take most of 2021 to complete.

This review will include short, medium and long term objectives and will help shape FFDC's role in the area over the next 5 years.

The application for the proposed in-filling of Lake Knox is currently with Knox Council, and we continue to work with the Knox Environment Society and other local groups to stop the State Government from proceeding.

Annual memberships due

A reminder that annual membership fees are due. If you have joined and paid membership fees since 1 January this year there is no need to pay again, we will carry forward your membership to 30 June 2022. Your membership helps us cover the cost of plants at our many planting events.

Please click on this link for information on [how to pay](#).

Anthony Bigelow - President



Sugar glider nesting boxes along the creek



Lizard Lounge in North Bayswater

Save Lake Knox campaign

With support from the community clearly not subsiding, when will our local politicians recognise that this issue is simply not going to disappear. The entire proposal from the State Government (Development Victoria) is flawed and should be torn up now.

This project represents a total failure of communication and consultation with the community as the ongoing objections and 17,000 signatures so far on the petition testify.

The State Government and Development Victoria must go back to the drawing board and start again, this time with genuine community input and goals less oriented to maximum profit.

Above all, Lake Knox must be retained as a sanctuary for the benefit of future generations.

Wetlands

Wetlands come in many varieties in the area. Some are remnant billabongs, and others are constructed, but they all provide a good balance and offer a refuge for our flora and in particular our fauna. Yarrabing in particular is home to 5 species of frog and offers great habitat for birds. Importantly the reserves offer a place for the community to seek solace and to reconnect.

Additionally wetlands help regulate the flow of stormwater into our creeks, and are an essential filter for urban pollutants before entering our creek, and ultimately the bay and ocean. We'd love to see more wetlands in our area. Check out Yarrabing when passing sometime (it's near Eastlink) along the bike path in Wantirna.

FFDC World Environment Day and National Tree Day events

Unfortunately we have had to cancel both our major public planting events again this year due to the COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings. Fingers crossed we will be able to conduct these events in 2022.

Both Knox and Maroondah Councils will now engage staff and contractors to plant the 6,000 plants, so it's still a big win for the local environment.

FFDC successfully applied for a grant of \$9,420 from MW for the proposed National Tree Day planting to cover the costs of the plants, site preparation, weeding and watering in the first 12 months to improve the survival rate of the plants.



Yarrabing Wetlands



Blue Billed Duck on Lake Knox

Recording bird sightings on eBird.org - Part 2

(Continued from the March 2021 newsletter)

When you click on the hotspot it reveals details about the checklists for that hotspot site. For the daylighted section of the creek in Bayswater North there are 4 completed checklists of birds and 19 species of birds identified mostly from me so far. Once the sites are set up it does attract other birders and I can see the contributions made by others in this wonderful community of citizen scientists. Some of these checklists also include photos for each identified hotspot site.

The site keeps track of your personal checklists via the My eBird tab giving you access to the records you have created for the site. It's great having an historical record as you can monitor change and make comparisons between sites.

I really encourage everyone to get on board with Ebird, especially given the circumstances that everyone finds themselves in having been restricted during the global pandemic.

Other sites along the creek where there are hotspots include Manson's reserve, Yarrabing wetlands, Winton Wetlands and Campbell's Croft. There is always something to observe and record at these sites. This data helps understand the ranges of our bird species and for calculations of bird numbers by the experts.

John Cull - FFDC Committee

EoDC2 Update

No changes since the last update in March.

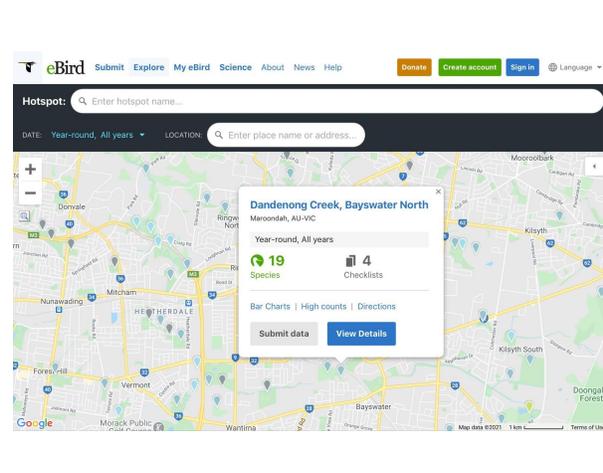
Drain Sock Trial

The location has been chosen for the trial of the drain sock, and approval has been received from the flood investigations team at Melbourne Water. A site visit to confirm that all requirements have been met will be scheduled in the next few weeks. Once confirmed, we will be looking to attach this to the stormwater pipe underneath the railway bridge on the Belgrave line along the creek in Bayswater

Vale Barry Robinson

Barry Robinson, foundation member, former President and life member of the First Friends of Dandenong Creek, recently passed away.

Barry was instrumental in the group's formation in 1999 and championed the best environmental values for the area beyond his involvement with FFDC. He was President and Vice President from 1999 – 2010, and ran the Waterwatch team for a number of years. He was a passionate and dedicated leader of our group and he set in motion many environmental outcomes in our area, which we simply cannot repay Barry for.



eBird image with 'hotspots' in our area of the Creek



Barry Robinson

Saving Our Skinks Project

The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on outdoor gatherings has meant the project is on hold. We are hoping we can restart later in 2021 and will keep you updated on developments.

Save our Sugar Gliders Project

We're finally making real progress on this project. The rollout of our sugar glider nest boxes started in June, with thanks to Richard Francis and the team from Abzeco (our project partner) for installing the first 25 boxes in public areas along the creek. We think they look pretty good (and hopefully the sugar gliders do too), and we're looking forward to surveying the boxes later this year (COVID permitting).

The sugar glider boxes are being pre-cut by a cabinet maker and then handed over to the Men's Shed in Ringwood to be put together, paint and tag and label the boxes for us. The boxes are being made with timber offcuts that would otherwise have gone to landfill.

Once the installation of the boxes in public areas is completed we will be in touch with those who registered their interest in hosting boxes in their gardens.

We have purchased a nest box survey kit. The kit includes a small digital camera, which is placed on top of an extension pole, and this is inserted into the side of the nestbox. The video feed is then sent wirelessly to three remote viewing monitors.

Lizard Lounge Project

Our skink revegetation site at Connolly Reserve in Bayswater North is looking fantastic, after a gargantuan effort by volunteers and the Maroondah Council Bushland team members, and specialist contractors over the last 12months. See photo on the front page.

The Maroondah Bushland team would like to expand this site with us provided FFDC can secure some additional funding for the expansion and maintenance of the existing site. In June we applied for a grant for \$26,000 from the Victorian Landcare grants scheme to cover the cost of plants, site prep, weeding and watering as well as support from Abzeco, our project partner.

A special shout out to Rebecca Primrose from Maroondah Bushland team for all of her amazing advice and expertise to help us achieve this outcome.

Pollution Monitoring

In recent months some of the pollution monitoring sensors have been damaged by flooding.

Melbourne Water has announced it will fund the maintenance and support of the equipment along the creek for the next 2 years, FFDC greatly appreciates their support for this ground breaking project. We will let you know when we can share the data with you that the sensors are collecting 24 by 7.

Dates to mark on your calendar

FFDC Annual General Meeting - Thursday 9th September 2021

Invitations with all the details will be sent out in August.

Spotted

Eels in Old Joes Creek in Bayswater in late May. This is very significant given the devastating pollution event in late 2017 that virtually wiped out the eels from the creek.

This newsletter is published by First Friends of Dandenong Creek Inc. We acknowledge the support of Maroondah Council for providing the printed copies.

Next edition of the newsletter is in November 2021, please email us your ideas for articles or stories of interest by the end of October 2021 to: ffdc1999@gmail.com.