



Tanjenong Tales

FFDC Newsletter March 2019

Edition no. 58

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President's Report

Welcome to the 58th edition of Tanjenong Tales.

Australia Day Award for Anthony Bigelow

Congratulations go to our Vice President Anthony Bigelow for a well deserved 'Local hero' nomination in the Knox Australia Day awards. As a Maroondah resident, Anthony was unable to contend for Knox's Environmentalist of the Year but his passion for the local environment is well known and this nomination goes some way to recognising his efforts.

Melbourne Water Community Grants

We have been successful once again with our application for project and support grants from Melbourne Water to fund our planting projects and our administrative costs for 2018/19. We received \$1000 for admin costs and \$5,775 for planting projects including our National Tree Day event in July.

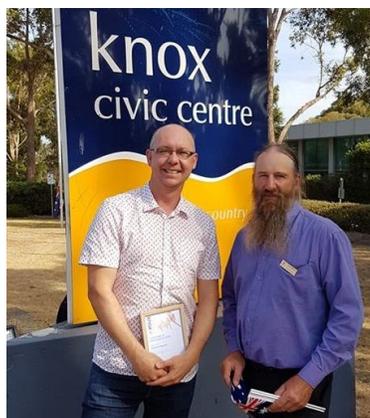
Planting events for 2019

We will be running three separate planting events in 2019, with over 9,000 indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses to be planted along the creek corridor between Bayswater and Vermont. The first event, will coincide with the group's 20th anniversary on the 5th of May. See details of these events on our Facebook page.

Pitfall drain covers

Melbourne Water has finally come up with a permanent engineering solution for pitfall drains covers for the local wetlands and billabongs to protect local wildlife from being trapped and drowning. The solution will replace a number of temporary covers at Mint Street and Marlborough Rd. A big thank you for local wildlife advocate Amelia Nicoll, and Sarah Watkins from Melbourne Water for their perseverance on this matter.

Charlie Miller - President



Anthony Bigelow receiving his Australia Day award



Temporary pitfall drain cover

Update on Pollution Monitoring

FFDC has engaged Bio2Labs, a private firm specialising in pollution monitoring, to conduct water and sediment sampling in our area of the creek and upstream of Old Joes Creek in Bayswater.

Our second report, funded by the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation and supported by the Knox Environment Society, is due to be released in the next few weeks. Not only will the report contain further soil and water sample analysis (used to identify the chemicals and heavy metals passing through our creek between Bayswater and Vermont), it will aim to highlight how the pollution is affecting the life within the creek and what we can do to help tackle this issue. Additionally, FFDC is seeing an increased push by local and state based authorities to tackle this issue in our space. Our stretch of the creek continues to be a hot spot for pollution events, and we have up to the 25 March already witnessed 10 pollution events for 2019. If you follow us on Facebook you will receive the report.

We are currently seeking another grant to extend the monitoring work done by Bio2Labs beyond 2019. Hopefully the data gathered so far and in the future will provide the EPA with enough evidence to conduct investigations to pinpoint and prosecute companies that continually pollute.

FFDC 20th Year Celebration

Who would have thought nearly 20 years ago, when the group was formed way back in May 1999, that FFDC would still be going strong today. This year we are organising an event to celebrate our 20th anniversary on Sunday 5th May (11:00am to 1:30pm) with a planting event in Manson’s Reserve in Wantirna. The event, sponsored by [Living Links](#) and supported by Knox and Maroondah Council Bushland teams, will also include an indigenous smoking ceremony, frog pond workshop, litter collection, BBQ, jazz band and some short formalities.

For details go to our website ffdc.org.au or Facebook page [@FirstFriendsof DandenongCreek](#).

Winton Wetlands Management

Some great news. Melbourne Water has signed off on a 10 year formal lease arrangement with Vic Roads for Winton Wetlands between Eastlink and the Dandenong Creek in Wantirna, thanks to the advocacy of FFDC. We are now just waiting on VicRoads to sign off. This will allow Melbourne Water to provide stewardship for the site without needing approval from VicRoads for any onsite work during the term of the lease and allow community groups like FFDC to become involved.



Bio2Labs taking samples along Dandenong Creek



Dry creek bed upstream from Liverpool Road Retarding Basin

New Billabongs

Melbourne Water’s Enhancing Our Dandenong Creek project is reconstructing billabongs along our stretch of the creek. The role of these wetlands in today’s urbanised catchments are very important. In urban and suburban areas, much of the land surface is covered by buildings and pavement, which do not allow rain to soak into the ground. Instead, most developed areas rely on storm drains to carry large amounts of runoff from roofs and paved areas to nearby waterways. The stormwater runoff carries pollutants such as oil, dirt, chemicals and lawn fertilizers directly to streams and rivers, where they seriously harm water quality, and as a result harm fish, macroinvertebrates and wildlife in general. The vegetation in wetlands help to filter the pollutants from the runoff and improve the water quality before it enters the creek. The latest billabong has been constructed at Scott’s Street Reserve in Heathmont. See photo below.

Melbourne Water Program Partner Recognition

Melbourne Water has formally recognised the contribution of FFDC, with a framed certificate, see photo below, for the many years of work that FFDC has contributed to the Enhancing Our Dandenong Creek project that delivered among other things the daylighting of the section of the creek between the railway line in Bayswater down to HE Parker Reserve in Heathmont. FFDC was represented on the community consultation group for the duration of the project that started back in 2014.

EODC 2

FFDC is invited to be part of shaping the next round of the Enhancing Our Dandenong Creek program. The initial invite is for a number of design workshops. The main objective of these workshops is to develop a range of prioritised projects that will form the next round of Enhancing Our Dandenong Creek. We are hoping that a number of the projects are in our area of the creek to build upon the great outcomes of the initial EODC including the daylighting project and the construction of several billabongs. We will keep you updated on progress.

Creek Running Dry

Known for its historical reliability as a permanent source of water, it's so dry at present, Dandenong Creek has stopped flowing in The Basin. The photo on Page 2 is from where the creek enters Liverpool Rd. Retarding Basin; just west of the confluence of Dobson’s and Dandenong Creek. This part of the creek has some small and large pools of water remaining. This is probably the best indication of how dry the Dandenong Ranges are at present following one of the hottest and driest summers on record. However the creek further downstream has continued to flow fed by water from the smaller tributary streams albeit at a very low level.



New billabong in Scott’s Street Reserve in Heathmont

Program Partner Recognition Award

Saving Our Skinks Project

FFDC was successful in raising \$5,500 through an Internet based funding project to save two species of Skink that are indigenous to “our” part of the Dandenong Creek catchment. Many thanks if you contributed. Through the generous support of the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning the final figure was in excess of \$13k!

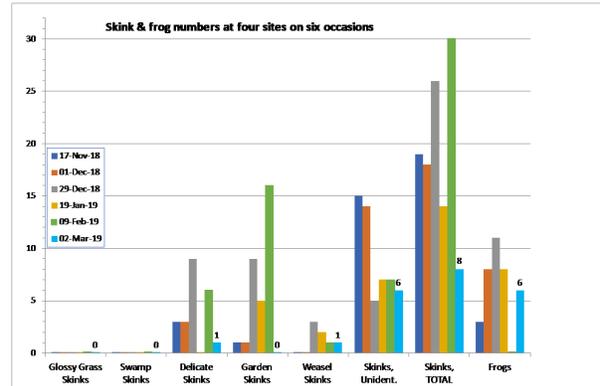
Over the current spring/summer/autumn period FFDC, with significant support from the Knox Environment Society (www.kes.org.au), has been conducting skink and frog surveys of four selected sites near Dandenong Creek where skinks are likely to be found. Using concrete roof tiles, we have created temporary homes for any creatures in the vicinity, and on six occasions to date have recorded the numbers and types of critters we have found under the tiles.

The photo shows two of the Garden Skinks we found and the chart summarises the results to date.



Saving Our Skinks Project(continued)

The fact that we are yet to find any Swamp or Glossy Grass Skinks indicates these lizards are “in danger” in the local area.



Bruna Iotti Bio

Bruna joined the FFDC Committee at the 2018 AGM.

“I have been involved in environmental volunteering and engaging others in voluntary work since 2007. I have this intrinsic need to help and my passion for sustainability matters is contagious. I arrived in Melbourne from England in July 2018. I am currently working at Sustainability Victoria looking after the Environmental Management Systems. I am really enjoying my involvement with the FFDC group. It has a varied range of activities and areas of environmental conservation work to suit many interests”.

Dates to mark on your calendar

FFDC 20th Anniversary Event - Sunday 5th May 2019 11:00am to 1:30pm Manson’s Reserve.

World Environment Day Planting Event - Saturday 1st June - 10:00am to 12:30pm - venue to be decided.

National Tree Day - Sunday 28th July - 11:00am to 1:30pm - Abbey Walk in Vermont.

For more details and up to date information on the events above and more, go to our website: <https://www.ffdc.org.au/> or visit our Facebook page: @FirstFriendsofDandenongCreek.

Spotted

A wallaby near the rail bridge in Bayswater in February.

Stop Press!

Finally some decent rain in the upper creek catchment after one of the hottest and driest summers on record. This is great for the new billabongs and it will soften the ground in preparation for our upcoming planting events.

This newsletter is published by First Friends of Dandenong Creek Inc
A0039273V

Next edition of the newsletter is in July 2019, please email us your ideas for articles or stories of interest by the end of June 2019 to: ffdc1999@gmail.com.