



Tanjenong Tales

FFDC Newsletter March 2020

Edition no. 61

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President's Report

Welcome to the 61st edition.

We are living in interesting and challenging times at present due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, and I hope everyone is safe and well.

We received some very sad news in late February and said farewell to Barbara Richards who passed away unexpectedly.. Barb was a well-respected and loved committee member for FFDC since 2007. Her presence and thoughtfulness and care were always evident in everything Barb did for the community and the group.. Sincere condolences to Barb's family and large network of friends, as you will be greatly missed.

At the present point in time, this year's public planting events will be placed on hold. I have spoken with representatives of both Knox and Maroondah Councils, and it's likely that both Councils' will employ a contractor to plant the tube stock; this would be for

both the National Tree Day and World Environment Day planting.

A number of other revegetation sites exist along the corridor, which were to be planted also this year, so depending on when public gatherings are allowed again, we may see one or two community events later this year, however that will be determined at a future time by the FFDC Committee and in consultation with both Councils.

I'm proud to announce that Jude Dwight has returned to the committee, after taking some time off. We look forward once again to Jude's contribution.

Please take care, and hope that life returns to 'normal' for us all at some point.

Anthony Bigelow - President



Vale Barb Richards



FFDC Committee for 2019/20

Vale Barb Richards

It is with great sadness that we report the sudden death of our long term committee member Barb Richards. Barb joined FFDC way back 2001 then the committee in 2007 and carried out the role of Membership Secretary with distinction for many of those years right up until her death in February. We are planning to dedicate this year's National Tree Day event, on Sunday 2nd August, in Barb's honour.

Update on Pollution Monitoring

FFDC received a Federal Government grant to the value of \$19,816 to deploy Real Time monitoring sensors along the creek between Vermont and Bayswater. The monitors will be installed by Bio2Lab for the group in 5 locations between Bayswater and Vermont. We believe this is the first type of deployment of this technology by a community group anywhere in Australia. The first phase will be conducting a trial of the monitoring solution, and once this has been completed we will look to roll out the alerting and make public the information. The intention is to provide greater visibility of the ongoing pollution events along the creek, with the expectation that this will provide further impetus for the authorities to chase up offenders.

Clean Up Australia Day

A massive community effort on Clean Up Australia Day with around 70 people turning up to help. We have smashed our previous record and collected 45 bags of rubbish. Everyone from 5 to 80 year olds were out collecting rubbish along both sides of the creek for 3km from HE Parker Reserve Heathmont down to Eastlink. A BIG thank you to the 1st Bayswater Scouts, Joeys and Cubs who turned up to assist. Plus all the volunteers.

A BIG shout out to event partner Jackson Taylor MP for supporting this event and rolling up his sleeves to help.

Coronavirus

All planned FFDC events for at least the next 3 months are postponed or cancelled. This includes our World Environment Day event planned for Saturday 6 June. We are planning to run our monthly committee meetings via video conference to comply with the current restrictions for social gatherings. Please stay safe during these challenging times and we look forward to continuing our great work with you when this is behind us.



Pollution monitoring equipment installed in stormwater drains



Collection from Clean Up Australia Day

Lizard Lounge Project

The implementation of our successful \$13,000 Federal Government grant, in aid of sensitive revegetation of land for the Glossy Grass skinks, is currently underway. FFDC will be working with Maroondah Council and David De Angelis to deliver the project over this year. The intention, in essence, is to convert previously mown grass on council land along the creek in North Bayswater, over to skink friendly habitat, once the survey for the site is completed.

Litterati App

Melbourne Water is trialling the use of the Litterati App as a way to gather data on litter hotspots in and around Dandenong Creek and then target those areas for clean-up.

Litterati is a geotagging app that allows users to photograph and tag rubbish and identify the most commonly found items using keywords. This provides an easy way to create a database of the types of litter items and where they are found.

Many community members, including First Friends of Dandenong Creek, are already out gathering data for our 'Dandenong Creek Challenge' and being part of the ongoing care of this vital waterway.

New Billabong in Manson Reserve

One of the creek's billabongs is about to come back to life. Construction is now underway to let stormwater fill one of the original billabongs in the area, at JW Manson Reserve in Wantirna. (See aerial photo below). Stormwater is being redirected into the billabong on the Eastern side, and will meander its way through the channel and then out the Western side of the billabong. This should see an increase in the wildlife in the area, and help to maintain a range of threatened flora.

Until the drought of recent years, the site included one of the most ecologically intact and diverse wetlands in Knox, and some of the best Riparian Forest. The billabong has suffered very seriously from drought. The site is still one of very few sites in Knox that are home to Sugar Gliders.

This project has been led by Knox Council and Melbourne Water.

Save our Sugar Gliders Project

More information to come shortly, and we'll be needing help from the Heathmont community to deliver this project!



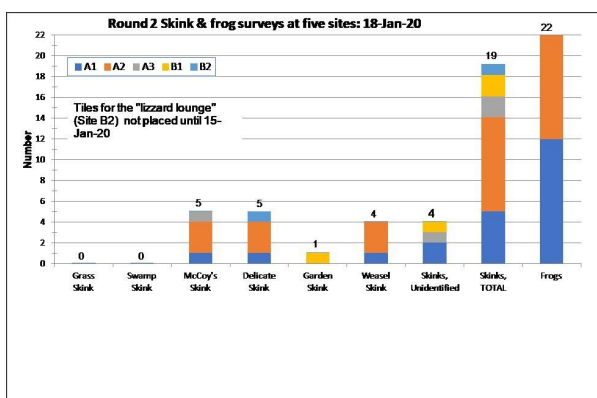
Using the Litterati App



Aerial image of Manson's Reserve billabong location

Saving Our Skinks Project

In our latest surveys we are yet to find any Swamp or Glossy Grass skinks, although we have found some McCoy's Skinks, that had not previously been found. Maroondah Council is partnering with us to protect and revegetate a site in Bayswater North. A summary chart of a recent survey is shown below.



EODC 2 - Update

Not much progress on EODC 2 since the last update in November. FFDC attended a stakeholder workshop run by Melbourne Water in early December to identify potential projects under the pollution reduction theme. The budget for this theme is \$5m. If all else fails the fall back option is to divert Old Joes Creek base flow into the sewer system.

Victorian Container Deposit Scheme

Finally common sense has prevailed in Victoria! The government has finally announced Victoria will get a container deposit scheme in 2023, albeit the last state to introduce one after bowing to lobby group pressure from the beverage industry not to introduce one for many years.

This will greatly reduce the amount of plastic and waste that goes to landfill, streams and ultimately the ocean and it will give a second, third and fourth life to beverage containers. It will also greatly reduce litter in our environment as, it has done in all other states.

Bio of Robert Lee

I am passionate about environmental sustainability particularly in trees. Arriving in Melbourne from Malaysia 4 years ago gave me the opportunity to represent the Bliss and Wisdom Foundation as the front line person leading the environmental responsibility. Bliss and Wisdom Foundation has a 10 years history with FFDC. And looks like it will be another 10 great years with FFDC supporting each other on the environmental effort. Our foundation is very grateful to continue the partnership with FFDC, and I am definitely thrilled to shoulder this responsibility going forward.

Robert joined the FFDC Committee at last year's AGM.

Dates to mark on your calendar

World Environment Day planting - Saturday 6 June
9 to 11:30am - **POSTPONED.**

National Tree Day planting - Sunday 2 August
11am to 1:30pm near scout hall on the creek near corner Barnic Rd and Barrow Drv in Heathmont.

Stop Press!

Fantastic to see Jude Dwight has rejoined the FFDC Committee after a short break.

Spotted

A colony of 9 sugar gliders spotted by a resident in Marlborough Road in Heathmont.

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 July 2020, please email us your ideas for articles or stories of interest by the end of June 2020 to: ffdc1999@gmail.com.