

# First Friends of Dandenong Creek Inc.



## Annual Report 2017

### **COMMITTEE**

We welcomed to new committee members in Anthony and Samantha Bigelow giving us an active committee of 9 throughout the year. Charlie Miller as President, vacant Vice President, Vicky Pearce as minutes secretary, Barb Richards as membership secretary, Frank Sullivan as treasurer and Bill Jones, Matt McCabe, Lex Edmond and Anthony and Sam Bigelow making up the general committee. The MacFarlane family remain capably in charge of event catering. Many thanks to all for your hard work and enthusiasm this year.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

FFDC currently has 113 members. There have been 6 new memberships in the past year. We will continue put an emphasis on allowing our volunteers to do the work they came to help with at our public events while committee members provide support, nourishment and canvass for new members. This approach seems to work well.

### **ENHANCING OUR DANDENONG CREEK PROJECT**

In 2014, Melbourne Water commenced community consultation for a \$6 million upgrade to the amenity of our section of the creek to offset damage created by storm water flooding. FFDC were among three local community stakeholders to join with Knox and Maroondah councils in the deliberations that have resulted in Melbourne Water agreeing to 'daylight' the creek from the rail bridge in Bayswater down to HE Parker Reserve in Heathmont, a distance of 850 metres. This is one of the most significant developments to occur in our area in the history of FFDC. One of our key aims is to restore the creek back to its original condition as near as practically possible. Funding is now confirmed and construction work should start in late 2017. In addition to the daylighting project there is also a native fish project that will re-establish native fish habitats along Dandenong Creek to support sustainable populations of nationally threatened dwarf galaxias and Yarra pygmy perch and a signage project that will point to areas of historical interest along our stretch of the creek from HE Parker Reserve down to Boronia Road.

### **TANJENONG TALES, WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE**

Three editions of Tanjenong Tales were published during the year. More than half the newsletters are emailed these days which significantly reduces the administrative burden and cost.

This year we launched our Facebook page with great success thanks to the efforts of Anthony Bigelow.

The website was moved to Landcare Victoria's new website platform for all its members.

### **NOTICEBOARDS**

The noticeboards have become challenging to care for due to the ravages of vandalism. We are working with Knox and Maroondah councils to rectify this. We acknowledge the efforts of Barbara Richards and Matt McCabe.

### **WATER WATCH**

The committee made a decision earlier this year to cease water testing because the monthly effort to co-ordinate and conduct the testing far outweighs the benefits. After testing for many years the conclusion is the water quality has remained about the same. The good news is the water has not deteriorated.

Thanks to Bill Jones for co-ordinating the testing over the past few years and to all the members and volunteers for giving up a Sunday morning once per month to conduct the tests.

### **GRANTS**

This year we received over \$1,600 in grant money. We acknowledge the continual funding support of Melbourne Water and Knox and Maroondah councils. Without this funding FFDC would struggle to undertake meaningful projects.

### **EQUIPMENT**

Our equipment has been kept in good condition and proved useful at our events this year. We currently have a BBQ, 2 waterproof gazebos, four A-frame signboards, a banner, 2 Hamilton diggers and 2 rubbish collection tools.

## **FINANCIAL POSITION**

We have maintained a strong financial position throughout the year. For details refer to 2017 Treasurers report on our website.

## **EVENTS**

### **Clean Up Day**

Despite a small turn out on Clean Up Day and a clash with a major Netball tournament, 4 bags of rubbish were collected along the creek and surrounds on 5th March at HE Parker Reserve. The low amount of rubbish collected on the day is testament to the continuous efforts of our members and volunteers along the creek throughout the year. Once again shopping bags and drink containers made up the vast majority of the rubbish collected. Thanks to Vicky Pearse for her efforts in collecting rubbish all year round.

### **National Tree Day**

In perfect winter weather conditions we had another hugely successful planting event in Manson's Reserve in Wantirna on National Tree Day. Over 120 volunteers and members planted 3000 plus plants including trees, shrubs and grasses in just over hour. This is probably the biggest turn out in terms of numbers in the history of planting events organised by FFDC.

The event was followed by a free sausage sizzle and refreshments. FFDC thanks the Box Hill Buddhist group for their ongoing support of our planting events.

**Charlie Miller – President to First Friends of Dandenong Creek.**