



## First Friends of Dandenong Creek

# Annual Report 2022

### **COMMITTEE**

We have operated successfully with an active committee of 11 throughout the year. Anthony Bigelow as President, Charlie Miller as Vice President, Hannah Skipworth as Secretary, Robert Lee as Membership Secretary, Chris Macfarlane as Treasurer and with John Cull, Bruna Iotti, Bill Jones, Matt McCabe and Jesse Oehm making up the general committee.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

FFDC currently has 213 full and associate members and is growing. There have been around 20 new memberships in the past year.

### **NEWSLETTER, WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE**

Three editions of Tanjenong Tales were published during the year in March, July and November.

Our Facebook page now has over 6,500 followers, up from 6,000 last year. The page contributes significantly to increased awareness of our group and the great work we do in the wider community. We acknowledge the efforts of Anthony Bigelow and Hannah Skipworth in managing our Facebook presence with regular posts and responses.

### **GRANTS**

This financial year we received just over \$21,000 in grant money for administration support, planting equipment and the Tree hollows project. We acknowledge the continual funding support of Melbourne Water, Landcare Vic, Knox and Maroondah councils. Without this funding FFDC would struggle to operate as an incorporated body and undertake meaningful projects.

### **EQUIPMENT**

We purchased more tree planters and mattocks for our planting events during the year.

### **FINANCIAL POSITION**

We have maintained a strong financial position throughout the year with an overall bank balance of **\$66,673.80** as at 30 June. A majority of that balance is funding for current projects. We opened a term account with a \$15,000 deposit and a debit account for our recurring expenses like our Zoom meetings and small purchases.

For details refer to the 2022 Treasurer's report on our website at [www.ffdc.org.au](http://www.ffdc.org.au).

### **EVENTS**

#### **Clean Up Australia Day**

We had around 60 volunteers at our Clean Up Australia Day event on Sunday 6th March along the creek at the end of Armstrong Rd in Bayswater. 12 bags of rubbish were collected which is way down on previous years. It was a joint event with Bayswater Rotary.

#### **World Environment Day**

World Environment Day 2022 on Sat 4th June saw over 250+ people attend our community event with partner Bayswater Rotary. This was our first planting event for 2 years due to the COVID lockdowns. Over 4,000 plants were planted in just under 90 minutes, an amazing effort by the local community. We acknowledge the support of Knox City Council for funding the event, and in particular to the Biodiversity team for their work setting up on the day and preparing the site and placing the plants.

## **National Tree Day**

National Tree Day on Sun 31 July saw 300+ people turn up at Tarralla Creek in Croydon to plant 4,500 indigenous plants in just 45 minutes. One of the fastest community planting we've ever been involved in. The lockdowns at this time of the year in 2020 and 2021 may have contributed to the turnout of so many people.

We acknowledge our community partners Friends of Tarralla Creek, Friends of Eastfield Park, Croydon, Bayswater Rotary and Bliss and Wisdom Foundation Australia for their efforts in organising the event and the efforts on the day making it such a successful event.

## **PROJECTS**

### **Pollution Monitoring**

There was some vandalism to some of the monitoring equipment along the creek earlier in the year which was extremely disappointing. We are grateful our project partner Bio2lab quickly provided repairs and replacements.

Melbourne Water is funding 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 are also working with Bio2lab on ways of sharing the data collected by the equipment with our members and the general public.

### **Save our Skinks**

The project has been on hold for the past 2 years mainly due to the COVID-19 restrictions. We are hoping to start up our surveys in the later part of 2022.

### **Eel video**

A year after releasing our award winning short film, [The Eels of Dandenong Creek](#) it has been viewed over 41,000 times on our social media platforms. In November last year, FFDC received the Premiers Sustainability Award for the film.

### **Save our Sugar Gliders**

We now have 50 glider boxes installed along the creek in Heathmont. Our glider box census earlier in the year observed 37 gliders occupying the boxes. Overall there was actual occupancy or signs occupancy in over 80% of the boxes. We have another 20 boxes to install.

### **Lizard Lounge**

We are working with Maroondah Council to expand the existing skink habitat site in Connelly Reserve in North Bayswater.

### **Drain Sock Trial**

We are working with Knox Council exploring two new location options for the trial in Mint Street Wetlands in Wantirna and Marie Wallace Park, following the refusal by VicTrack to install the sock under the railway bridge in Bayswater. Knox Council has kindly allowed us to extend the term of the grant once again.

### **Tree Hollows Project**

We successfully applied for a grant of \$9,350 from Melbourne Water to install hollows in trees in Winton Wetlands in Wantirna for hollow nesting species such as kookaburras, galahs, parrots, cockatoos and gang gangs.

Our project partners TreeTec and Ironbark used different techniques to create around 30 new hollows, including door cavities, hollow logs and 'hollowhog', for the above species.

### **Koomba Park Weed Control project**

A joint grant application between FFDC and Friends of Dandenong Valley Parklands for \$32,500 was awarded by Melbourne Water for a 2 year period. The project, in Koomba Park in Wantirna, is using goats for weed control and 3000 plants the Friends of Dandenong Valley Parklands have grown in their nursery, to restore indigenous plant species currently under threat from invasive species such as kyukuya grass.

## **AWARDS**

### **Knox Sustainability Leadership Award**

Our work in the area was recognised on Australia Day 2022 by Knox Council. Our President, Anthony Bigelow, received the Sustainability Leadership award.

### **Premier's Community Sustainability Award**

In November 2021 FFDC received the Premier's Community Sustainability Award for the "Eels of Dandenong Creek" video.

**Anthony Bigelow – President - First Friends of Dandenong Creek.**