



Tanjenong Tales

FFDC Newsletter July 2019

Edition no. 59

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President's Report

Welcome to the 59th edition of Tanjenong Tales.

It's been a busy few months for FFDC since the last newsletter was published back in March. We kicked off with our 20th Anniversary celebration event on Sunday 5th May in Manson's Reserve (see full story on page 2). That was followed by a hugely successful World Environment Day event on Saturday 1st June opposite HE Parker Reserve (see full story on page 2). Finally, on Sunday 28th July, we held our annual National Tree Day event near Abbey Walk in Vermont.

Despite all the recent publicity and work by the EPA and Knox Council, it is extremely disappointing to see continual pollution events in the creek. On average we see one event per week. The new Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018 commences on 1 July 2020. The amended Act will give EPA enhanced

powers and resources as well as the ability to issue stronger sanctions and penalties which hold environmental polluters to account. Let's hope that the EPA is not constrained by local politics in carrying out their role when the new Act comes into force in 12 months time. We will watch with interest. See our 'Update on Pollution Monitoring' (page 2 and pictured below), for exciting, world-first pollution monitoring technology being trialled in the Dandenong Creek.

It is that time of year again, annual memberships are due. Memberships are still \$5 for individuals and \$10 for families. Membership fees help fund plants for our regular planting events. We would greatly appreciate your renewal payments by the end of September at the latest. You will receive reminders and options for payment via email.

Charlie Miller - President



Scott Street billabong planted out



Pollution monitoring equipment installed in stormwater drains

Update on Pollution Monitoring

We are delighted to report that Melbourne Water has partnered with Monash University, South East Water, Knox Council, EPA Victoria and First Friends of Dandenong Creek in a new development in pollution monitoring that could be a real game changer for detection of sources of pollution. Get the full story here:

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/what-we-are-doing/news/new-technology-target-pollution-problems-our-waterways>

World Environment Day

FFDC's World Environment Day 2019 brought together over 150 volunteers from all walks of life to Bayswater (opposite HE Parker Reserve). The event began with a traditional Welcome to Country and Smoking ceremony from a Wurundjeri representative, and, through the incredible work of all our volunteers, helped return over 3,500 indigenous plants to the area.

A special thanks to the guys at The Basin Free Range & Grass Fed Meats who kindly donated all of the meat for our BBQ. Our good friends from the Bayswater CFA helped water in the plants. Once again we'd love to thank our friends at the Box Hill Buddhist Society, who, for the past 10 years, have been coming to our planting events. With thanks also to the Bushland team at Knox for helping to fund and organise the event.

FFDC 20th Year Celebration

Who would have thought 20 years ago, when the group was formed way back in May 1999, that FFDC would still be going strong today? This year we celebrated our 20th anniversary on Sunday 5th May with a planting event in Manson's Reserve in Wantirna attended by around 80 volunteers. Sponsored by [Living Links](#) and supported by Knox and Maroondah Council Bushland teams, the celebration opened with a Welcome to Country and indigenous Smoking Ceremony by representatives of the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri people. 1000 grasses, shrubs and trees were planted to provide food and habitat for local birds and animals - a number of our local politicians getting their hands dirty too. The planting was followed by a BBQ thanks to Chris and Lisa Macfarlane and entertainment from the New Melbourne Jazz Band. Thanks to the FFDC committee members for organising a very successful and enjoyable event and the FFDC members and volunteers including our long-standing supporters, the Box Hill Buddhist Society.

And a final acknowledgment, it was great to see FFDC founding and life members Barry Robinson and Frank Sullivan attend the event - great work Barry and Frank!



20th Anniversary Event - FFDC committee and life members



World Environment Day - great to see old teaching young

Update of FFDC aims

At our April committee meeting the committee members voted on a few little tweaks to the group's published aims and objectives. The main change is an extension of the area along the creek that the group is active in with our eastern boundary extended out to Liverpool Road, Kilsyth South (previously Bayswater Road, Bayswater). Our western boundary remains at Boronia Road in Wantirna. A big thank you to Lex, Bruna and Jude for their work. Please see our revised aims and objectives on our website at www.ffdc.org.au.

Bio of Hannah Skipworth (new committee member)

After keenly following the work of the First Friends of the Dandenong Creek, I pulled on my gumboots and joined the planting effort on World Environment Day. At this event I met some of the people that make up the First Friends, and immediately set about joining. I recently became a member of the Committee and can't wait to start contributing wherever possible. I bring with me experience in communications, events and research management, and the design of active-learning programs within higher education. I work and study at Monash University, and spend my spare time in my garden.

Thank you Hannah, and welcome!

EODC 2

Following on from the highly successful Enhancing Our Dandenong Creek (EODC) project that delivered among other things the "daylighting" of the creek between the railway line in Bayswater down to HE Parker Reserve in Heathmont and many billabongs, we now have EODC 2 in the early planning stages. It is currently labelled the "Parklands, Floodplains, Billabongs and Wetlands project". The opportunities being explored in these early stages include

- Wetland and billabong rehabilitation program (Winton Wetlands, Scott St Reserve, Koomba Park, exploring new wetlands etc).
- Floodplain and parkland rehabilitation program (focusing on VicRoads and Parks Vic areas).
- Improving amenity and physical form by reinstating natural features.
- Weed control and revegetation along Dandenong Creek and tributaries.

Thanks again to Melbourne Water for inviting FFDC to participate as a key stakeholder of this project.



EODC stage 1 - Daylighting of the creek



National Tree Day near Abbey Walk in Vermont

Saving Our Skinks Project

The Skinks go into a hibernation-like torpor in the cooler months with limited movements. So we won't be surveying Skink numbers until the end of September. Around this time we are also going down to the Mornington Peninsula where the Swamp and Glossy Grass Skinks are definitely known to exist. The differences between some of the skinks are quite subtle so it will be good to have our resident expert Zoologist, Dr David De Angelis with us to point out the differences.

With some of the funds raised we have ordered 2,200 plants from the KES Nursery, particularly grasses, ground covers and low shrubs. These plants allow plenty of light to reach the ground and provide warm, sunny spots for the sun-loving skinks. The 2020 planting season should see these and hopefully more plants go in the ground for important skink habitat along the Dandenong Creek floodplain areas.

National Tree Day

We had an amazing turn-out of volunteers on National Tree Day, Sunday 28 July. More than 300 people turned up to plant 4,000+ indigenous plants along the northern bank of the creek near Abbey Walk in Vermont. This is by far the largest and most successful National Tree Day event in the history of FFDC.

A huge thank you to the following:

- The FFDC committee members for organising the event and their efforts on the day.
- The Maroondah Bushland Management team for preparing the site and their efforts on the day.
- Living Links for the funding of the plants.
- Chris and Lisa Macfarlane for organising the BBQ.
- The Maroondah Photographic Society.
- The Box Hill Buddhist Society, FFDC members and all other volunteers, thank you!

We look forward to another great event together on National Tree Day, 2020.

NSW Container Deposit Scheme

NSW's recycling industry is hailing the success of the recently introduced container deposit scheme, with two billion bottles and cans collected in the first 19 months, easily beating expectations. It's been a win on multiple fronts with an estimated 57% reduction in containers going into landfill, far less containers left on streets, country roads, parks, waterways and in the ocean. It has also generated 500 new jobs. The Victorian Government must now seriously challenge the vested interests that are preventing the introduction of container deposit scheme here in Victoria.

Dates to mark on your calendar

FFDC final planting event for 2019 - Saturday 17 August 10:00am to 12noon Colchester Reserve, Boronia.

FFDC Annual General Meeting - Thursday 12 September 7:30pm in Room 4 Maroondah Federation Estate, Greenwood Ave, Ringwood.

Stop Press!

We've been successful in securing a \$5,000 grant from the Lord Mayors Charitable Association to create a video on the lifecycle of the eels of Dandenong Creek. More to come.

Spotted

Don't miss the beautiful (& carnivorous) sundews starting to flower along the creek.

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

Next edition of the newsletter is in November 2019, please email us your ideas for articles or stories of interest by the end of October 2019 to: ffd1999@gmail.com.