



NOVEMBER 2025

Annual Report

First Friends of Dandenong Creek's 2025 Activities

Presented to
Community Members

Presented by
Anthony Bigelow

PHOTO: WIEL HARPER

President's Report: Reflections on 2025 Achievements and Future Directions



As President of the First Friends of Dandenong Creek, I am proud to share our remarkable journey in 2025.

Throughout the year, we have worked diligently to enhance the health of our local creek and engage the community in meaningful conservation efforts. These initiatives have not only strengthened our mission but have also fostered a deeper appreciation for the natural beauty that surrounds us.



Our commitment to conservation has led to significant achievements this year, including successful habitat restoration projects and increased community participation in our events. We have expanded our partnerships with local schools and organisations, which has been vital in promoting awareness about our ecosystem. The passion and dedication of our volunteers have propelled our programs forward, making a tangible impact on the environment and engaging residents in the preservation of Dandenong Creek.

In conclusion, I am excited about the future of FFDC as we continue to inspire and lead community efforts toward sustainable practices and conservation. Together, we can ensure a thriving ecosystem for generations to come.

The Dedicated Committee of First Friends of Dandenong Creek



The Committee of First Friends of Dandenong Creek is a passionate group of individuals committed to fostering environmental awareness and conservation in the Dandenong Creek area. Their diverse backgrounds and expertise contribute to effective decision-making and community engagement. Special thanks to John Cull, Robert Lee, Bruna Iotti, Chris MacFarlane, Mitch Golden and Malathi Nadarajan.

Each member plays a vital role in driving the organization's initiatives, from organizing community events to collaborating with local stakeholders. They work tirelessly to promote conservation efforts, ensuring that Dandenong Creek remains a healthy habitat for both wildlife and the local community. Through their combined efforts, the committee strengthens FFDC's mission and enhances its impact on the environment and community.

Together, the committee strives to inspire others to join in the efforts toward sustainable environmental stewardship and the protection of Dandenong Creek.

Key Achievements

- Planted **8,000+** indigenous plants across priority sites in Maroondah and Knox
- Expanded the Kreffft's Glider program, including the first private landholder nest-box trial (soon to be announced)
- Generated **\$7,000+** through our corporate planting program with Landcare Australia
- Received on-ground support from the **Bliss and Wisdom Society**, and hosted their Master from Taiwan during 2025
- Delivered strong community participation for **World Environment Day** and **National Tree Day**
- Advanced our group governance, securing ATO tax-exempt status and beginning the DGR application



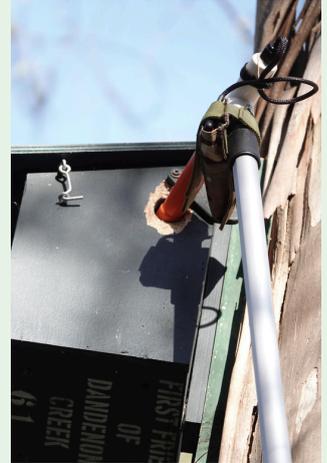
Activities & Events

2025 was filled with meaningful on-ground work and community involvement. The **Krefft's Glider survey** program expanded, including the first private landholder trial, and **Clean Up Australia Day** brought volunteers together to restore key sites. We held successful **World Environment Day** and **National Tree Day** plantings, and welcomed corporate teams from **Engie** and **General Mills** for two high-impact planting days.

A highlight of the year was the visit from the **Bliss & Wisdom Society** Master, recognising our shared commitment to caring for the creek and its surrounds. We extend our thanks to **Landcare Australia, Maroondah Council, Knox Council, Bayswater Rotary, Bayswater CFA**, and the **Bliss & Wisdom Society** for their continued support and partnership.



Citizen Science: Engaging the Community through Krefft's Glider Program



The glider program continued to deliver exceptional results this year, with 88 nest boxes now installed and 387 surveys completed since 2022. Gliders were recorded in 35% of surveys, more than double the national benchmark of around 15%. Bee presence remained extremely low, occurring in just 1.3% of surveys, with only one historic hive recorded – and even then, a glider was present.

These results highlight the strength of the habitat along Dandenong Creek and the effectiveness of our nest-box work.



2025 saw deeper collaboration with Maroondah Council, who supported the program by training staff to participate in monitoring and survey work – strengthening consistency and long-term data collection. A major new step this year was the beginning of a private landholder trial in Heathmont, with nest boxes now being rolled out to selected properties. This trial will help us understand how gliders move across the suburban landscape and how private land supports broader habitat connectivity. Special thanks to John Cull, whose ongoing analysis and data work have been essential in understanding trends, occupancy patterns, and overall program performance.

By contributing to this project, volunteers, council partners, and local residents are helping build one of the region's most successful citizen-science programs – strengthening habitat, knowledge, and long-term survival prospects for Krefft's Gliders

Grants and Partnerships: Building Collaborative Conservation Efforts



Partnerships continue to underpin everything we do, providing the support, resources, and expertise needed to deliver meaningful conservation outcomes along the Dandenong Creek corridor. Our collaborations with councils, environmental organisations, community groups, and corporate partners strengthen every aspect of our restoration and engagement work.



In 2025, we strengthened key partnerships and expanded our collaborative work.

Maroondah Council provided funding support for **National Tree Day**, along with ongoing assistance across our projects, including the glider program.

Knox Council supported our **World Environment Day** event, helping deliver another strong community turnout.

Our partnership with **Landcare Australia** again proved invaluable, enabling successful corporate planting events with teams from **Engie**, **Mentholatum** and **General Mills**, generating vital funds for continued restoration.

These partnerships broaden community involvement, support citizen science, and help drive long-term ecological improvements across the Dandenong Creek corridor.

Our grants and partnerships provide the foundation for sustainable conservation, deepening our impact and enabling community-driven restoration year after year. Special thanks to **Friends of Dandenong Valley Parklands** for growing and supplying *Eucalyptus ovata*, *Eucalyptus viminalis* and, especially, the endangered ***Eucalyptus yarraensis*** free of charge for our planting work.

Overall Metrics

Highlights

Engaged 350+ community volunteers

Engaged 45 corporate volunteers

282 members

Total active members this year

Engagement

Increased social media followers

Enhanced community event
participation

6,777

Total followers on social media
platforms

Financial Data Overview for 2025

Financial Summary – Year Ending June 2025

FFDC received \$3,752.90 in donations, grants, and memberships. Grant income was reduced this year due to fewer available opportunities and a more conservative approach to applications. This was offset by an increase in community donations.

Total expenses were \$9,952.62. Most expenditure supported our core work of revegetating and protecting Dandenong Creek. This included \$6,700 to complete the Drainsock project, which captures stormwater waste at Marie Wallace Reserve.

FFDC remains in a strong financial position. Our term deposit (\$15,739.79) continues to accrue interest. There are no outstanding liabilities or unfunded projects. As of 30 June, our combined account balance was \$12,208.48.

– Chris Macfarlane
FFDC Treasurer, 2025

Acknowledgements: Honoring Our Dedicated Volunteers and Supporters



The success of First Friends of Dandenong Creek is made possible by the tireless efforts of our dedicated volunteers. Their commitment and passion for conservation drive our initiatives and foster a sense of community. Each volunteer contributes uniquely, whether through hands-on activities or advocacy.

During the past year, our volunteers logged countless hours in various roles, from organising events to participating in creek restoration projects. Their collective efforts not only enhance local ecosystems but also inspire others to join our mission. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who contribute to our successes and the well-being of Dandenong Creek, reinforcing the importance of community-driven conservation.

In closing, we sincerely thank our volunteers for their unwavering commitment, which is vital to our ongoing successes and future projects. Together, we can create a lasting impact.

Looking Ahead: Future Conservation Projects for 2026 and Beyond



As we look to the future, First Friends of Dandenong Creek is committed to expanding conservation projects that enhance and protect our natural environment. Our focus will include habitat restoration, community education, and engaging local stakeholders in active preservation efforts. Collaborating with schools and community groups is vital in fostering a sense of responsibility and connection to our unique ecosystems.

Planned initiatives for 2026 include workshops on sustainable practices, tree planting events, and the establishment of wildlife corridors along the creek. These projects aim to increase biodiversity and improve the health of the creek ecosystem. Additionally, we will seek further partnerships with environmental organizations to leverage resources and expertise, ensuring our projects are impactful and sustainable. Together, we can create a thriving environment for future generations.

In conclusion, our vision for the future is to build on our successes and continuously strive for a healthier, more sustainable Dandenong Creek environment, engaging the community every step of the way.

**FIRST FRIENDS OF
DANDENONG
CREEK**

Contact Us

www.ffdc.org.au

ffdc1999@gmail.com