

Friends of Merri Creek



NEWSLETTER

February–April
2006

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Broken Promise on Merri Creek Park

The Minister for Conservation and Environment, John Thwaites, has broken his promise to release the plan of the Merri Creek Park in December 2005.

Mr Thwaites made this commitment in person to the Friends at a meeting of the 'Community Cabinet' at Darebin Town Hall in October. We now think that we are unlikely to see the plan until March at the absolute earliest. It will now be at least two years since March 2004 when we were originally shown the draft proposal for the Park and of course the freeway is now open.

When the plan is released, it will only extend north from Mahoneys Rd to Craigieburn East Road and it will not include all the important sites.

Once again, we ask Friends members to please check the Parks Victoria website (www.parkweb.vic.gov.au), and to make a submission that urges Parks Victoria to protect all the sites with significant conservation values, even if they cannot be incorporated in the Park. (Your submission could even say that FoMC has identified many of these sites.)

Also see our proposal for a Merri Creek Conservation Corridor on Page 2.

The 2006 Friends' Committee

The following members were elected at the Friends' Annual General Meeting on Saturday 12th November 2005:

Office Bearers

President: David Redfearn

Vice President: Ann McGregor

Secretary: Ray Radford

Treasurer: Colin Abbott

Membership Secretary: Julie Mason

Office Coordinator: Jack Svendsen

After the meeting, Leslie Fraser indicated that she would continue as a General Committee Member, so this means that there has been no change to the Friends' Committee from last year. A special thanks to Julie Mason for continuing as Membership Secretary, although she recently became a mother, and to Colin Abbott for continuing as Treasurer, although he just started a new business venture.

Sub-Committee Coordinators

Planting Group: Ruth Shiel

Litter Group: Paul Prentice

Streamteam: Irene Baker

Newsletter (layout): Dean Lombard

This is the same line-up as last year.

Representatives to MCMC

The following six members will represent the Friends on the Merri Creek Management Committee in 2006: Trevor Hausler, Ann McGregor, Allie Dawe, Paul Prentice, Harold Mackrell, Ruth Shiel.

There have only been two changes from last year: Peter Mollison has stepped down after two active years, including representation on the MCMC Planning & Issues Sub-Committee; and Alan Brennan, who has been a representative

Continued on back page

Merri Creek Conservation Corridor

Our aim is to protect and enhance ecological flows and the unique biological and geological landscapes, significant Indigenous cultural and other historical features of the Merri Creek Corridor for the enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations.

The idea is for a contiguous reservation along the Merri Creek Valley managed either primarily for conservation (reserves) or private and public land that has committed land use and management that is compatible with conservation aims. (Eg. A number of landholders of the Merriang Landcare Group in the Merri Creek Corridor north of Bald Hill currently combine broadscale grazing with sympathetic biodiversity conservation measures.) See **K** on the map.

The Corridor has a width of at least 200 metres along the Merri Creek but also aims to protect open space corridors through important remnant vegetation away from the creek that is essential for ecological flows such as animal migration and movement, genetic flows of plant life and water movement.

Problems that need to be addressed

1. Lack of provision for a habitat corridor between significant habitat 'nodes.'

Existing and projected development is steadily removing the open landscapes that link the Cooper St Grassland to larger grassland remnants such as Craigieburn Grassland. Even paddocks can provide an approximation of the structure of native grassland that permits a proportion of the indigenous fauna to survive or move through them. A wide corridor containing open space habitat (more than creek and verges) is needed to allow Grassland fauna species to move freely. Without an adequate habitat corridor the grassland reserves are doomed to become a series of islands, subject to progressive extinction of animal and plant species. Climate change presents a particular challenge to isolated reserves. See **A** on the map.

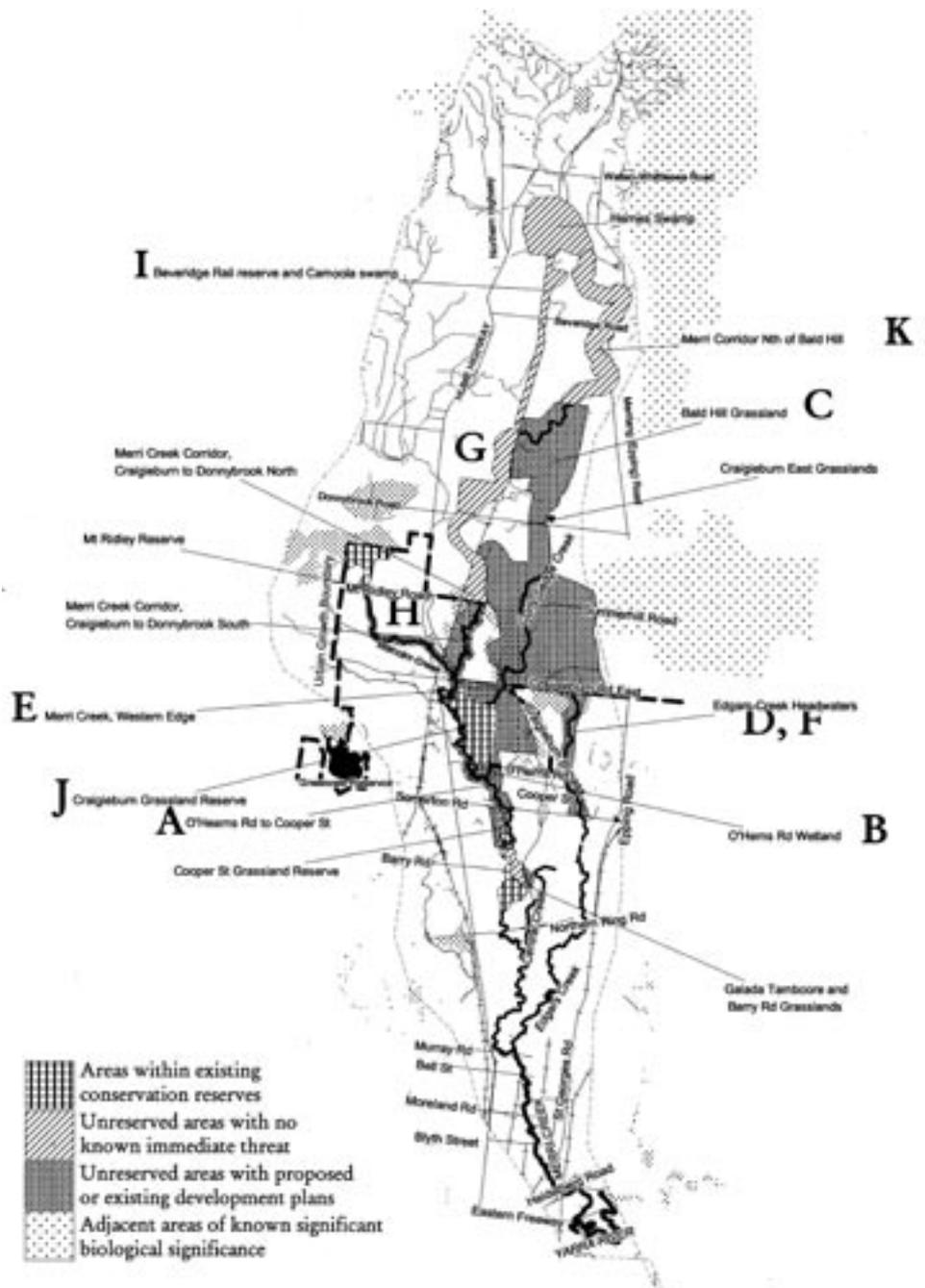
2. Ongoing and predicted destruction of areas possessing unique biological and historical values along the Merri Creek valley by industry, resource extraction, housing and associated infrastructure. In particular:

Wetlands/swamps, such as at O'Herns Rd is unprotected and threatened by industrial development. See **B** on the map.

Native grasslands, such as Bald Hill Grasslands, recognised as being of National Significance for its biological value is to be destroyed by quarrying. See **C** on map.

Old growth Redgums, such as those up to 600 years old in the upper Edgars Creek area that are currently threatened by urban developments. Many such developments retain some of the old trees but so alter the surrounding landscape that the trees are unable to reproduce. See **D** on map.

Text continues below right...



Friends' News

Streamteam gets own monitoring kit

Melbourne Water has given a water quality testing kit to the FoMC Streamteam in honour of their years of monthly monitoring. The kit consists of pH and conductivity probes, some test kits for dissolved oxygen, phosphorus and ammonia, a sample bottle and pole – altogether very generous. This will make the group almost independent in terms of gear required to do their testing.

Even more grant success

FoMC has had more grant success, gaining \$5000 funding from the Victorian Volunteer Small Grants for production of a video showing FoMC volunteering activities. This grant was presented by Brunswick MP Carlo Carli at our AGM in November. Thanks to our Membership Secretary, Julie Mason, for putting in an excellent application.

Welcome back

Welcome back to Brendan Casey who returned with his family to Thornbury from Ceduna SA after three years away. Brendan was an ex Streamteam coordinator and is the discoverer of Growling Grass Frogs on the Creek.

Golden Sun Moth Surveys

Two community led surveys of the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth in December 2005 once again highlighted its elusive, sun-loving nature. The first survey, on Sunday 11th December, was a perfect day for the moth, being sunny and hot with no wind, resulting in 1,254 Golden Sun Moths being sighted. However, the second survey, on the following Sunday 18th December, was cool, overcast and windy, resulting in not one moth being seen.



Some of the Streamteam regulars admiring the contents of their new water quality testing kit supplied by Melbourne Water.

Merri Creek Conservation Corridor

(continued from previous page)

Escarments. Along the western bank of the Merri Creek in the Craigieburn area, earthworks for new industrial developments frequently bury the boulder-dominated Escarpment Shrublands along the Merri Creek, important refuge areas for flora and fauna, replacing them with barren weescapes. See **E** on map.

3. Inadequate recognition within existing planning processes of the natural and cultural values and of measures needed for their continued existence.

Proposed Development along the Edgars Creek in Epping North illustrates several instances where biological and cultural landscape features including ancient Redgum Woodlands and drystone walls dating from the 1850s are destroyed or retained in small reserves. These small reserves show inadequate buffers, linkages and provision for the ecological processes that the continued existence of the features rely upon, dooming them to gradual destruction. See **F** on map.

4. Ongoing deterioration of biological and other values under existing management regimes, such as 'lifestyle blocks', urban parkland golf courses and other amenity type planting, railway and roadside reserve management, and conservation reserves.

'Lifestyle blocks' result in a loss of the low intensity land management that has retained grassland and woodland habitat within the catchment. These developments spread urban-type environmental problems such as feral animals and infrastructure developments into rural landscapes. Examples of this type of development can be seen in the Kalkallo and Beveridge area. See **G** on map.

Manicured urban parkland, golf courses and other amenity type planting are associated with altered drainage patterns, fertiliser run-off, environmental weeds in landscaping and pesticide use. These pressures are especially likely to damage small, narrow remnants, eg. Malcolm Creek See **H** on map.

Railway and roadside reserve management: Lack of weed management or inappropriate weed management techniques threaten biologically diverse remnants such as the Beveridge–Wallan Railway line. Unsecured access points leaves fragile habitats such as these open to damage from off-road vehicles. See **I** on map.

Conservation reserves: Lack of resources to manage conservation reserves, in particular for weed control, feral animal control and visitor management threatens the future of these areas. See **J** on map.

Brian Bainbridge

President's Report

Slightly edited from the report given at the AGM

Perhaps much of what we have done in 2005 has not been headline grabbing but there has been much activity nonetheless and some achievements.

A lot of territory has been covered in the Secretary's Report (*see Nov. 05 Newsletter*) so I will seek to comment on broader strategic issues. But first a few well deserved acknowledgements.

I would like to thank all members for their commitment during the year, those who held office and those who organised and carried out the many tasks that befall an organisation such as ours. Our efforts are all voluntary and the time given to ensure the success of the FoMC mission no matter how great or small is immensely appreciated. Although I am reluctant to single out any particular individuals, I would like to give special thanks to Ray Radford as Secretary, his efforts make the job of the committee so much easier and also to Jack Svendsen, Warren Cooper and Monica Williamson for holding the fort at our office at the Brunswick Town Hall throughout the year. I would also give special thanks to my fellow committee members for coming out to our monthly meetings particularly on those miserable winter evenings.

Now to some of the strategic issues that we faced throughout 2005:

Merri Regional Park

We continued to pursue this vigorously in 2005 year and our efforts culminated in a meeting with Minister for the Environment, John Thwaites at the Community Cabinet in Darebin in October. As members are aware, there have been promises to release the concept plan for the park for some time now but we were given a commitment that the document would be released in December with a three month period for comment. We also put to John Thwaites that highly significant areas along the Merri are under increasing pressure from increasing urbanisation and the Government should use Public Acquisition Overlays to protect these to ensure a continuous natural corridor along the creek. Our case was considerably strengthened by the

invaluable work that Wendy Moore and Brian Bainbridge did in identifying and describing sites and features of significance along the upper Merri and our thanks go to both of them. Thanks also to those members of State and Federal Parliament who lent support to our case. There are real and continuing threats to the upper Merri and we need the continued support of a everyone in a campaign to secure and improve a major environmental asset. One thing we did discover in our research was that the State Government actually committed to a park in 1991 so let's hope that the wait is not too much longer.

Meeting with Chair of Melbourne Water

It was with much delight that we welcomed a visit by the Chair of Melbourne Water, Cheryl Batagol early in the year. Cheryl was taken on a short tour of the creek by a group of some of our more knowledgeable FoMC members and we had a very positive discussion with her afterwards. We reiterated our view that Melbourne Water was an important partner in the Merri Creek project and that we would welcome its involvement in MCMC as used to be the case. Cheryl agreed to be accessible to community organisations and would take our issues away with her. There have been other key appointments at Melbourne Water in the form of Rob Skinner as Managing Director and Chris Chesterfield as the General Manager, Rivers and Drainage. Melbourne Water has a huge responsibility as the steward of our waterways and we look forward to developing a productive relationship with this important body.

Wetlands in Moreland

Members will recall that this issue arose when the City of Moreland reneged on the construction of a wetland as part of stormwater treatment on the Pentridge Estate in Coburg. After repeated representations to the Council

a meeting was held with FoMC and MCMC

to canvass the possibility of wetland development along the Merri in Moreland. We discussed some potential sites and will be meeting again in the near future to move this forward. Potential sites that were discussed were Moomba Park in Fawkner and Golf Road in Newlands. My thanks go to Cr Andrea Sharam and Eamonn Fennessy of Moreland Council for their assistance and support with this issue.

Yarra Valley Water and the Craigieburn STP

In July, Luisa Macmillan, Wendy Moore and I attended a consultation of various parties concerned with the Yarra Valley Water Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) at Craigieburn which Yarra Valley Water and the EPA wish to decommission, but are currently prevented from doing this as it is a controlled action under the EPBC Act, since the water discharge is deemed to be essential for the maintenance of Growling Grass Frog habitat. YVW put forward a proposition to substitute this with a discharge from the treatment plant at the Aurora estate however there are complications with this as YVW wishes to designate the discharge as an environmental flow. The EPA is not happy with this as it would no longer have control over the discharge should it assume the status of environmental flow. As yet the matter has not been resolved, but we expressed our concerns at the environmental flow proposal and will also consult further with those with expertise in the Growling Grass Frog habitat requirements before adopting a definitive position.

Growling Grass Frog Fund

The Growling Grass Frog Trust Fund has decided to fund Geoff Heard's valuable research project into the



habitat requirements of the Growling Grass Frog. This will be a three year research project which will yield valuable information about the Growler. It will come up with recommendations based on good science about how we best use the fund to ensure that the Growler remains a long term resident of the Merri Corridor.

MCMC Strategic Plan

FoMC was invited to take part in the MCMC strategic planning process. As yet the plan has not been finalised but we welcomed the opportunity to have input into setting MCMC directions.

Upper Merri Campaign and planning controls

We have formed alliances with other groups in the upper Merri to plan a campaign to protect the values and the sites of significance in the Upper Merri. Our first focus was the meeting with the Minister to ask for the release of the concept plan for the regional park. The release of the Hume Smart growth Corridor in late November will further inform the direction of our campaign. Remember, if we lose any of the valuable sites along the Merri, they will be gone for good! Once again thanks to Wendy and Brian for their efforts in gathering information about the sites.

Ray has ably represented FoMC at meetings with DSE and local government to develop planning controls for the Merri. This arose out of a meeting with the then Minister for Planning, Mary Delahunty, to make a case for including all Melbourne waterways in the development of planning controls under Melbourne 2030.

Merri Park Master Plan

The City of Darebin undertook to develop a master plan for Merri Park in Northcote. FoMC willingly engaged with this process but we were dismayed to find that the plan proposed a car park for Northcote High School on the St Georges Road frontage of the park. We vigorously expressed our opposition to the car park as we also did to the proposed sealing of the path near the retarding basin as part of the completion of a bicycle link to the Merri. Good sense eventually prevailed and the proposed car park was dropped but we are not confident

about the sealing of the trail. Many thanks to Leslie Fraser, who ably represented us during the process and took on the issue of opposition to the car park with considerable vigour and success.

FoMC video/History thesis

We are excited at the prospect of a video to use for promotion of FoMC activities and David Wardell, a VCA graduate, is undertaking the project at the time of writing. The project will be underpinned by \$5,000 of funding from the Department of Victorian Communities which has just been announced. We thank the State Government for its support of this project which will be a valuable tool in promotion of our activities.

We are also excited by the project being undertaken by Sian Smith who is writing a history of our group as part of her honours thesis at the University of Melbourne. A number of us have already given Sian the benefit of our accumulated knowledge and we look forward to the final publication.

Yarra Riverkeepers

Some of you will be aware that I also took on the responsibility of President of a new group, the Yarra Riverkeepers. Robin Merrick, another FoMC member, has also taken on a major role in the development of this group. Yarra Riverkeepers seeks to advocate for the Yarra on a whole of river basis and has adopted as its strategic priorities planning, membership and community awareness of the Yarra. Unlike FoMC, Yarra Riverkeepers is purely an advocacy group but we hope that we can build bridges with the hands on groups along the Yarra and articulate their issues within a whole of Yarra context. A couple of challenges we had during the year were a development on a floodplain on a floodplain in Coldstream (we lost in VCAT but will take up the broader issue with various authorities) and the flows study of the Yarra which was undertaken by Melbourne Water as part of the development of the Central Sustainable Water Strategy. FoMC has joined Yarra Riverkeepers as a member.

Development of Operational Guidelines for Native Vegetation Management Framework

Ann McGregor represented us in this process. We have written to the Minister for the Environment urging urgent adoption of these guidelines which will underpin the management of native vegetation on private land in particular. The framework in which the guidelines are to operate are excellent but the implementation of the guidelines is vital and must not be delayed any further.

Judy Bush & Barbara Miles

What can I say about these two magnificent people? Both left the MCMC this year after many years of superlative service to the Merri Creek and its community. Their huge depth of expertise, their generosity and just the fact that they are both great company will be much missed by each and every one of us. Without their contribution neither the MCMC nor the Friends would have had anywhere near the effect that we have had over the last 16 years and it was a huge honour for us to nominate both Judy and Barb as life members of FoMC. We wish them both all the very best in their new lives and we look forward to developing an equally profitable relationship with their replacements.

Challenges for 2006:

This list is by no means exhaustive but I would see some of our key priorities for 2006 as being:

- A continued campaign to ensure that the Merri Regional Park delivers real protection to the whole of the upper Merri corridor
- Working with other groups, the community and government to ensure appropriate development along the whole of the Merri but particularly in the upper Merri and to secure the protection of sites of significance
- Working with Moreland Council and MCMC to develop wetlands along the Merri in Moreland

Community bonds

Moonee Ponds is not just a whimsically named creek that sounds like sulky Brits ("moody Poms") and a venue for harness racing – more sulky people! - but also a suburb where, in Humoresque St, dwells Australia's wackiest lady. New Zealand has Xena, the US has Wonder Woman, Britain has Miss Marple, Germany has Heidi... and we have Dame Edna Everage, noted for her fondness for nocturnal arboreal marsupials.

Reluctantly returning to the real world, we watch the wandering waterway winding around Woodlands Park with its historic homesteads and memorials and its animal sanctuary, opposite Tullamarine Airport and an almost full toxic-waste dump; soon it's joined by the Greenvale and Attwood Creeks, and the Yuroke which comes by way of the almost 5 km. long Broadmeadows Valley Park.

The threat of a railway track across this reserve was averted when the State Government chose the Albion route for trains to the airport – also saving five handsome old stations beside level-crossings from demolition and banishment underground; however it subsequently welshed on its responsibilities and scotched the whole project. True, there is a service provided by the imposing Skybuses, but they don't have the carrying capacity or the immunity to traffic jams that "air rail" offers to travellers elsewhere, such as the Netherlanders and the French, the Queenslanders and the New South Welsh.

Shared footways are a different matter, and as you'd expect the Valley Park has one running its entire length, with an underpass up north at Somerton Rd: a vital installation in view of the traffic situation, with the grade separation at Roxburgh Park station and the Cooper St duplication.

And two of Melbourne's longest paths intersect where the ring road crosses the Moonee Ponds beside the Jacana Wetlands. A lofty viaduct carries Sydney trains; Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve, De Havilland Ave etc. adjoin Essendon Airport. Cricket and football can be practised, and archery and tennis, and bowls and BMX, and even swimming – in the Oak Park aquatic centre, that is.

The Lionsville retirement homes, Vision Australia, the Bouverie Centre in Travancore and the Flemington Community Centre look after people's needs in various ways; and in Strathmore, a plant nursery and a primary school nurture young growers of both kinds! There's plenty of birdlife, not only in the creek but also at the lake in the beautiful Queens Park, Moonee Ponds. However there are no jacanas, as we don't have the lily pads that enable them to walk on water.

Just downstream from Pascoe Vale station, appropriately, is Kelvin Thomson Park, named after the environmentalist and Federal Member for Wills who, with his brother Lex, founded the pioneering Pascoe Vale Naturalists. The musical monicker by the way comes from founding father John Pascoe Fawkner, who is also commemorated in a local reserve.

From here to Flemington Bridge the creek is effectively turned into a drain, with a concrete channel below steep, artificially smoothed grassy slopes – rather unsightly and

hazardous for the path user. By contrast, diverting walkers and cyclists via Vanberg Rd Essendon has left a small densely-vegetated ravine unspoiled; and beyond Mount Alexander Rd, even with the tollway looming above, the waterway is once again attractive and the footway safe and convenient,



thanks to numerous underpasses.

And suddenly at Macaulay Rd the creek changes character, widening out to its final tidal reach, formerly known as the Railway Canal; and the path follows it to the Waterfront City precinct of Docklands, where Route 48 from North Balwyn now terminates.

So that adds boats and trams to the planes and trains and buses and bikes we've already seen, along with the social institutions, recreational facilities and green areas. The Moonee Ponds is a wonderful focus for human and natural activities.

Paul Prentice (FoMC Committee member)

President's Report (continued from page 5)

- A continued commitment to the good governance and the operations of the MCMC
- Exploring opportunities to further educate and engage our community in the values of the creek and its environs
- Exploring opportunities for the protection and improvement of the Growling Grass Frog habitat

Finally I would like to give my thanks to all of you for your support and hard work during 2005 and I hope that we all emerge refreshed and ready for the very real challenges of 2006.

David Redfearn (President)

Friends' Life Members – Dick Harcourt

The tenth in a (broken) series of short histories of the Friends' Life Members

Dick Harcourt had an interest in natural history since he was in primary school and he began purchasing Crosbie Morrison's then famous magazine *Wild Life*. When he was 15, the magazine published two of Dick's letters about Lyrebirds nesting, calling and dancing, in the section "For Boys and Girls." In early 1947 he also compiled an incomplete bird list for the Sale district. Interestingly, Dick still has his collection of *Wild Life* magazines from 1943 until 1946, which he has had bound. It includes the 1944 report by David Fleay of the first platypus bred in captivity.

Dick was also interested in forestry and he attended secondary school forestry camps at Mt Macedon. At this time, he wanted to become a naturalist or a forester. However, during year 11, his interests changed to physics, chemistry and mathematics, and these were the main subjects that he studied when he went on to Melbourne University. He completed a Bachelor of Science degree and a Diploma of Education and then taught maths and science at technical schools for three years. However, he wasn't happy teaching so he did some extra studies which included botany.

He then travelled overseas for a year doing a variety of jobs, including working with the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture in Northumberland, trapping and tagging migrating salmon and trout. Although he was tempted to study more botany and become a naturalist or a forester, he decided to do a Masters of Science degree in theoretical chemistry and this subject has remained the basis of his working life since then. He completed a PhD in theoretical chemistry at Monash University, then held a research fellowship at Melbourne University for two years, after which he lectured in Chemistry from 1965 to his early retirement in 1993.

Dick was introduced to FoMC in the early 1990's by one of the founding members, Margaret Gottstein (who moved to Israel about ten years ago). He saw this as an opportunity to renew his early interest and concern for the environment. Soon, he became a participant at planting events, especially at the southern end of the Creek, closer to his home in Kew and easier for him to use his preferred mode of travel: public transport. For a number of years now, Dick has been responsible for coordinating at least one of the planting events each year. In appreciation of his long involvement with the Planting Group, Dick was awarded Life Membership of FoMC in 2004.

Dick also sought other avenues to fulfil his environmental interests, often helping to weed the wetland at Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Cooperative and participating in the Tree Project. However he also continues his scientific work

as an honorary Fellow or, as he puts it, "a MUG" (Melbourne University Geriatric). This allows him the freedom to do his own research, which involves studying the distribution of electrons in molecules. One application of this work could help understand how oxygen attaches itself to the haemoglobin in our bloodstreams as one of our vital life processes.

Besides his environmental and science interests, Dick has been jogging for 54 years (making him one of the first people to practice the sport) and he regularly participates in the 8 km 'Mountain to Surf Fun Run' in Lorne, along with his wife Alison. Incidentally, Alison (who is also a "MUG" - tutoring in Mathematics and statistics) was co-author of the famous Henderson Report, *People in Poverty* in 1970. Together they also participate in the sport of rogaining, which is similar to orienteering. Dick and Alison were married in 1968 and they have two children: Leonie, who is a medical practitioner in Canberra, and Pierre, who is studying environmental law in Edinburgh and has stood as a candidate for the Australian Democrats in a number of elections.

Dick and Alison are members of a number of organisations concerned with Aboriginal reconciliation, the environment and local and international issues. They have planted lots of indigenous plants in the front and back gardens of their home and in 1995, Dick and another local resident successfully lobbied Booroondara City Council to ensure that native plants were planted in a nearby traffic roundabout and in three surrounding islands.

Ray Radford (Secretary)



Vale Rowena Phillips

Rowena Phillips was a FoMC member, who regularly attended the monthly Streamteam water quality monitoring events, until she lost her battle with cancer in November

2005. Rowena was very passionate in her love for the macroinvertebrate surveys and she will be much missed by the group.



Friends of Merri Creek events calendar

FEBRUARY

Sunday 5 — Litter Clean-Up

Bell St, Coburg, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 30 A1.
Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 5 — Streamteam water quality testing

Upstream side of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller Street North Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway map 30 C10.
Phone 9354 9885.

Sunday 19 — Handweeding and Weed Identification 1

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, 10am-1pm. Melway map 30 C9. Learn how to identify weeds and then help to eliminate them from this wonderful wetland habitat. Funded by Citipower. Phone Leslie Fraser 9481 7365.

Sunday 26 — Darebin Community Festival

Darebin City Council event at All Nations Park, Northcote.

MARCH

Sunday 5 — Moreland Council, Sydney Rd Street Party

Sydney Rd Brunswick, 12 noon-7pm. Melway map 29 G8. Look for the Friends' stall near the Brunswick Town Hall. If you can help staff the stall, please ring Ray Radford 0422 989 166.

Sunday 5 — Streamteam water quality testing,

Upstream side of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller Street North Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway map 30 C10.
Phone 9354 9885.

Sunday 12 — Litter Clean-Up

Murray Rd, Coburg, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 18 A11.
Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Friday 17 — Deadline for articles for the next newsletter

Please send to admin@mcmc.org.au.

Sunday 19 — Handweeding and Weed Identification 2

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, 10am-1pm. Melway map 30 C9. Join the second round of identifying weeds and helping eliminate them from the wetland. Funded by Citipower. Phone Ruth Shiel 9489 5259.

Sunday 26 — Woody Weed Cut & Stack

Craigieburn Grasslands, Enter from O'Herns Rd Somerton, 10am-1pm. Melway map 180 F6. In 2005 we took out lots of Gorse, but there's still more to do. Let's see if we can create more and bigger piles than last year. Funded by Parks Victoria Community Grant. Phone Nicole Lowe 9354 5045.

APRIL

Sunday 2 — Litter Clean-Up

Walker St East, Northcote, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 30 F12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 2 — Streamteam water quality testing

Upstream side of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller Street North Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway map 30 C10.
Phone 9354 9885.

Sunday 9 — Handweeding and Weed Identification 3

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, 10am-1pm. Melway map 30 C9. Join the third round of identifying weeds and helping eliminate them from the wetland. Funded by Citipower. Phone Ruth Shiel 9489 5259.

Sunday 30 — Weed Marking/Mapping/Monitoring

Craigieburn Grasslands, Enter from O'Herns Rd Somerton, 10am-1pm. Melway map 180 F6. We need your help to identify and eradicate a number of weed species and aid the restoration of the native grasslands. Funded by Parks Victoria Community Grant. Phone Brian at MCMC 9380 8199.

MAY

Sunday 7 — Litter Clean-Up

Moreland Rd East Brunswick, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 30 A5. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 7 — Streamteam water quality testing

Upstream side of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller Street North Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway map 30 C10.
Phone 9354 9885.

Sunday 14 — Weed Mapping including Woody Weeds

Cooper Street Grasslands, enter from beside the Istra Social Club, Cooper Street Campbellfield, 10am-1pm. Melway map 180 K10. We need your help to identify and eradicate a number of weed species and aid the restoration of the native grasslands. Funded by Parks Victoria Community Grant. Phone Pascale Pitot 9484 5752.

Sunday 21 — Twin Lakes Walk

It's on again! Walk from Edwardes Lake to Coburg Lake along the Merri Creek and return along Edgars Creek. Meet at the Edwardes Lake dam wall, Edwardes St Reservoir opposite the hotel, at 1.00pm. Melway map 18 D5.
Phone Paul 9489 5062.

2006 Committee *(continued from front page)*

from 2002 and a Substitute for two years beforehand, has had to step down as he has a new job as Environment Coordinator at Hume City Council and he will now be representing the Council on the MCMC. Thanks to Peter and Alan for their contributions.

They have been replaced by Harold Mackrell and Ruth Shiel. Last year, Harold was a Substitute, but he has been a Representative many times previously, while Ruth very capably filled a vacancy on the MCMC Merri Creek & Environs Strategy Implementation Sub-Committee.

Substitute Reps to MCMC

Although they were not endorsed at the AGM, David Redfearn, Kimberley Flanagan, Ray McMahon and Pascale Pitot later said that they were interested in being Substitute Representatives to MCMC. Except for David, all are new to this role and they will all be invited to the meetings of MCMC and its Sub-Committees.

The new Substitutes have replaced Harold Mackrell, who has now become a Representative, and Julie Mason, who did not re-nominate due to her new responsibilities as a mother. Both were very active as Substitutes and as Representatives on one of the two MCMC Sub-Committees.



Ray Radford (Secretary)

Congratulations to our Membership Secretary, Julie Mason, and her partner Kevin on the birth of their daughter Claire in September 2005 and we welcome Claire to the Merri Creek. Thanks too to Julie for continuing on as Membership Secretary.