

2017 Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 14 November, 6.30pm for 7.30pm

CERES Lower Merri Room, Roberts St East Brunswick

Below the Merri Table & Bar – enter through the mosaic gate in Roberts St

Designing for urban grasslands: presentation on how to improve the design around urban grasslands, with Adrian Marshall, landscape architect, PhD researcher at the University of Melbourne, and author of the VNPA report, 'Start with the Grasslands.'

Adrian's presentation will be most relevant to our efforts to conserve grasslands around the new developments in the north of the catchment.

Also, once again featuring the Exhibition: Merri Creek – from wasteland to parklands.

AGENDA:

1. President's Report – David Redfearn
2. Election of the 2018 Committee
(Nominations invited – see below)
3. Election of six Friends' Representatives to MCMC
4. Discussion of possible activities for 2018
5. End of year celebrations

Drinks and nibbles provided.

All members are invited to attend the AGM

Help celebrate another successful year by joining us for refreshments at 6.30pm before the AGM at 7.30pm. Hear Adrian Marshall talk about how to improve the design around urban grasslands, admire the fabulous Merri Creek exhibition again, have your say in running the Friends group, and party afterwards.

Registration required: This year we are asking people to register for catering purposes – please go to our website calendar for details (deadline 8/11/17).

How about joining the FoMC Committee?

All committee positions become vacant at the AGM and it's always good to have some new people on the Committee. A role on the Committee would suit someone who would like to do more in the group but perhaps isn't able to attend activities. Currently the Committee holds five meetings a year of about two hours, in the even months before the AGM.

If you're interested in becoming a Committee member in the future, you can see what we do by attending meetings and receiving Agendas. Or, if you've been a member for at least 12 months, you could become a Substitute

Representative to Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) in preparation to becoming a full Representative. We currently have a vacancy for one Representative.

If you are even slightly interested in any of the above roles, please contact Ray Radford by email at friendsofmerriecreek@gmail.com or by phone on 0422 989 166. Also contact Ray for a Nomination Form, or download it from our website under *Membership*. The forms must be received before 10th November, although nominations for any vacancy will also be welcome at the AGM. It is absolutely okay to nominate yourself and leave it open to be seconded. An election will only be held if there are more nominations than vacancies.

Check Your Membership

Please note that only financial members as at Tuesday 7th November can vote at the AGM or nominate for positions. However, we cannot approve memberships at the AGM.



Participants at the Strettle Wetland Planting in Thornbury on 13 August 2017.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Friends Activities 2017

This is my 21st year as Secretary, so am I destined to have this role for life?

2017 Friends Committee:

President: David Redfearn

Vice-President: Ann McGregor

Secretary: Ray Radford

Treasurer: Nicole Lowe

Membership Sec: Monica Williamson

Committee members: Nick Williams and Jane Miller.

The only change from the 2016 Committee is that Jane Miller replaced Yasmin Kelsall.

Also on the Committee were these representatives of Sub-Committees:

Regeneration Group: Nicole Lowe

Litter Group: Paul Prentice

Streamteam: Irene Baker

Newsletter: Dean Lombard.

The Committee met bi-monthly until 30 September, which is the limit of this report.

Friends Representation on MCMC:

Our representatives on the Merri Creek Management Committee were Ann McGregor as President, Ann Sanson as Treasurer, Nicole Lowe as Vice-President, and Committee members Pascale Pitot and Jane Miller. Jane Farmer was originally replaced by Laziza Hawkins, however she too has resigned, creating a vacancy.

Our representatives remain the most consistent members at MCMC meetings.

David Redfearn, Suzi Shaw, and John Parham remain as Substitute Representatives from 2016, while Rebecca Mayo has stepped down.

Regeneration Group Activities:

The number of **maintenance** activities is still growing, however fewer folk actually participated – an even 100 attended these events (down from 140 in 2016):

Handweeding at the Friends' site near Strettle Wetland on 16/10/16 & 9/4; Direct Seeding & Weeding near the new Merri & Edgars Wetland Coburg on 28/5; Woody Weed Whacking at Bababi Marning on 19/11/16, 19/3, 30/4, 20/8 & 17/9, where we didn't quite complete Block B; and the new activity of Weeding out African Weed Orchids at Njarri-djarrang on 26/8 and 23/9, where we took out 79 orchids and cleared a quarter hectare of the grasslands.

However, once again this year we held fewer **planting** events than in the past years, due to limited funds being available. 127 people attended these planting events: at Jukes Rd Fawkner for "Picking Pockets" on Mother's Day 14/5; at McBryde St Fawkner for "Buzz Planting" on 18/6; at BT Connor Reserve Reservoir for "BBB Planting" on 16/7; and at our own site near Strettle Wetland Thornbury on 13/8.

We planted a total of 3120 plants, which was a bit more than the 2500 planted in 2016, but way less than the 9380 planted in 2015. As usual, these events often involved tree-guarding, litter clean-ups and handweeding.

We also helped out at Moreland's World Environment Day on 4/6, and Yarra's National Tree Day on 30/7.

Thanks again to the MCMC Ecological Restoration Team for supporting most of the plantings and also supplying barbecues later. Thanks also to the Darebin Bush Crew for resourcing our expanding site near Strettle Wetland, Thornbury.

Coordinator: Nicole Lowe.

Litter Clean-ups:

42 people cleaned up lots of litter monthly, except January: at Clara St East Brunswick on 2/10/16 and 2/4/17; at Merlynston Creek Nth Coburg on 6/11/16 and 12/3/17; at Walker St East, Northcote on 4/12/16; near Rushall Station Nth Fitzroy on 5/2; at Moomba Park Fawkner on 7/5; a special extra clean-up with Sacred Heart Mission at Dights Falls Clifton Hill on 16/5; at Moreland's World Environment Day, Edgars Creek Coburg on 4/6; at Rushwood Drive Craigieburn on 2/7; at Bell St Coburg on 6/8 and at Harding St Coburg on 3/9.

Coordinator: Paul Prentice.

Newsletter:

Dean Lombard continues to do great layouts and produce high-quality *Merri Growler* newsletters. This year, 8-page newsletters were printed and sent in February, May, August, and November.

Layout: Dean Lombard.

Streamteam:

Monthly Waterwatch tests continued on Merri Creek at St Georges Rd and on Edgars Creek at the waterfall. A total of 72 people attended at the Merri Creek site and 37 at the Edgars Creek site. The variations in the water quality and macroinvertebrate abundance that we see are linked to seasonal temperature and water level change. Highlights this year were the dragonfly larvae in the family *telephlebita* seen twice at the Merri Creek monitoring site in North Fitzroy. Also a one off sampling of the newly created wetlands in Coburg North when we saw taper tailed tigers (a type of beetle larva) and water scorpions. Thank you to all the regular water testing enthusiasts, occasional attendees and interested passers-by who all play a critical role in supporting the continued testing at these sites.

Coordinator: Irene Baker.

Merri Birdwatch:

There were 36 bird surveys and 175 registrations on our quarterly bird surveys at ten sites along the Merri and at Edwardes Lake. The results are uploaded to the global bird database eBird (thanks to Trevor Hausler). Thanks also to our survey leaders, especially Tristan Best who leads surveys at two sites.

Coordinator: Ann McGregor.

Campaigns:

We were involved in a number of planning issues, including a VCAT refusal to allow a proposal to build 21 townhouses of 3 or 4 storeys each, on a steep site in a bend of Merri Creek at 2 Spry St North Coburg. Thanks to Ann McGregor for her work on this and other submissions.



Walks Talks and Tours:

160 people enjoyed the Merri Magical Gum Morning in Merri Park on 5/3 – along with the Friends of Merri Park sub-group.

Other Activities and News:

The FoMC Committee has worked on succession planning – mainly documenting the roles and responsibilities of office bearers and coordinators, but also including policies and procedures. We also started the process of renewing our website, which should be ready soon. Grants were received from: Department of Health and Community Services Community Shade Grants, Port Phillip Bay Fund Community Large Grants, Parks Victoria, Biodiversity On-ground Action – Community & Volunteer Action Grants 2017, Moreland Celebrating Place Grants, Department of Environment, Land Water & Planning, plus substantial crowdfunding through our successful Pozible campaign.

25 people attended the Flax Lily and Blue-banded Bee count on 13/11/16; only 2 people turned up to help survey Golden Sun Moths on 23/12/16; and 8 people helped with the Kangaroo Grass Seed Harvest on 5/1. We held stalls at the *Happenstance* Festival on 25/2, and our regular one at the Sydney Rd Street Party on 5/3.

Altogether, about 750 people attended around 80 events involving FoMC, and this doesn't include any of our sub-groups, like MECCARG, Friends of Edgars Creek or the new Friends of Merri Park.

Thanks again to Monica Williamson for looking after the memberships and our Instagram post; to our web master, Simon D'Alfonso; to Ruth Shiel for updating our only sign near Roseneath St Clifton Hill; to Julie Mason for welcoming new members; and to Jane Miller, who relieved Suzi Shaw in managing our Facebook page.

Ray Radford (Secretary 2017)

Birds along Merri Creek in early spring

Spring had arrived and so had the bird breeding season, when we surveyed our regular nine sites in September.

New Holland Honeyeater, Pied Currawong, Blackbird, Little Raven, Noisy Miner, Magpie-lark were all recorded as nesting. Spring-summer migrants such as the Reed Warbler, Brown and Rufous Songlarks were recorded, but no Sacred Kingfishers (yet). Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoos were at three sites, and Pallid Cuckoos at two sites. There were plenty of raptors: Black-shouldered Kite, Collared Sparrowhawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel, Brown Falcon and Australian Hobby were all recorded at various sites.

Frogs were vocal at several locations.



Red-browed Finches are grass seed-eaters, regularly recorded at five of our survey locations. Photo: Peter Mollison

A total of 82 bird species was seen across the nine sites surveyed. Rainbow Lorikeets, White-browed Scrubwren, Red Wattlebird, Magpie and Little Raven (all native species) were recorded at all nine sites. The Rainbow Lorikeet won the 'most numerous species' award with a total count of 180. Galgi Ngarrk was the site with the highest diversity (38 species), followed by Edwardes Lake and Bababi Marning with 36.

All our survey results are uploaded to eBird, a global repository for bird observations. There is an amazing amount of information freely available from the eBird website: go to <http://ebird.org/ebird/australia/explore> to start exploring the data. If you click on the 'Explore

Hotspots' link, you can then enter a hotspot name that corresponds to one of our survey locations. Four locations start with Merri Creek in the name; the others are site names like Bababi Marning/Cooper St Grasslands Reserve, or Coburg Lake Reserve. From there you can see how many species have been reported for that hotspot, a bar chart for each species showing the months when they have been reported, and every checklist submitted. (Friends of Merri Creek are the 'top eBirders' in terms of number of checklists submitted for each of our sites, although other observers submit many checklists as well.)

Ann McGregor
BirdWatch Coordinator

Fourth Merri Birdwatch survey for 2017

Bird surveys will be held from 8.45–10.30 am at nine sites along Merri Creek as listed below. Beginners welcome, BYO binoculars if possible, but no dogs please, as they reduce the number and variety of birds to be seen. The contact for all Birdwatch events is Ann McGregor 0429 386 102.

Free leaflets on Merri Birds (normally \$2) are available for all participants

Surveys at the following seven sites are on 19 November

Egan Reserve – Harding Street – Strettle Reserve – Normanby Avenue: Meet at the bluestone steps at the end of The Grove, East Coburg (Melway 30 A3).

Edwardes Lake: Meet at playground adjacent to Griffiths Street, Reservoir (Melway 18 E5).

CERES – Moreland Road: Meet at the seats on the Merri Path at the rear of CERES, East Brunswick (Melway 30 B7).

Merri Park and Phillips Reserve: Meet at the end of Victoria Street, East Brunswick, at the BBQ shelter (Melway 30 B8).

Hall Reserve – Yarra Bend Park: Meet at the Rotunda, Hall Reserve, Clifton Hill (Melway 2D D1).

Galada Tamboore: Meet at the end of Hatty Court, Campbellfield (Melway 7 K6).

Galgi Ngarrk (Craigieburn Grasslands): Meet at O'Herns Road gate off Hume Highway, Somerton (Melway 180 E6).

Note this survey may not be completed until around 12 noon. Please contact the group leader to register beforehand, and receive important information about Galgi Ngarrk and any last-minute changes: Bridget Gardner: 0417 519 251.

Surveys at the following two sites are on 26 November

Coburg Lake Reserve: Meet near the car park, Lake Grove, Coburg (Melway 17 H10).

Bababi Djinanang (Jukes Rd Grasslands), Fawkner: Meet on Merri Path at end of Jukes Road, Fawkner (Melway 18 A2).

Merri Musings

Successful grants: \$500 from Parks Victoria for buckets, mattocks, pruner pouches, geared loppers, a folding table and payment of PO Box rental for a year.

\$49,984 (over 3 years) from Biodiversity On-ground Action – Community & Volunteer Action Grants 2017 for the project, *The Secret Seven: Seeds for our Flora's Future*. This will involve volunteers growing seven types of seed, either using containers at homes, in community farms, or in restored sites; plus skill-building workshops. We'll be looking for volunteers for this, so if you're keen, let us know ASAP by email to friendsofmerriecreek@gmail.com



Meeting with Minister: The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio (fourth from right), met with some members of FoMC and staff from Merri Creek Management Committee and Moreland City Council at our Blue-banded Bee planting site near Moomba Park Fawkner on 14 September to announce the Community & Volunteer Action Grants 2017 (one of which FoMC received – see above). Afterwards, Minister Lily planted a lily!

Spry St – a win at VCAT: A proposal to build 21 townhouses of three or four storeys each at 2 Spry Street Coburg North, on a steep site in a bend of Merri Creek, has been defeated at VCAT. The planning permit application was refused by Moreland Council, but appealed by the applicant. Many of the townhouses would have been less than 20 metres from the top of the creek bank, with roofs towering 10–12 metres above the Shared Path. Some of the balconies were less than 3 metres from the Creekside open space.

Lined up against the proposal at VCAT were Council, many local residents, FoMC, Merri Creek Management Committee and Melbourne Water. A planning specialist, Dr Stephen Rowley, assisted us in arguing for a better outcome at a three-day hearing of the Appeals Tribunal in September. Thanks to the Friends members (via our Facebook page) and local residents who contributed to payment of his discounted fees.

The Tribunal affirmed Council's refusal to grant a permit. Its decision states "...put simply, at the setbacks proposed,

the proposed dwelling pods are too close to the [Merri Creek] reserve and too high. The whole of the building interface to the Creek is unacceptable on my assessment." And "...I find the proposal does not meet the environmental objectives of ESO1 [Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1] and policies within the [planning] scheme that seek to enhance the natural environment of the Merri Creek corridor." The conclusion states *"The Creek is a waterway and open space corridor of strategic importance in metropolitan terms."*

The applicant is likely to apply again with revised plans, and there are other multi-storey developments being planned along the Creek. This underlines the urgent need for clear setback and height limits, similar to those introduced along the Yarra. We need better protection for our Creek valley from intrusive over-development.

VicRoads land transfer: FoMC recently found out about a Moreland Council decision made way back in December 2015 to approve the sale/exchange of a 35m wide strip of land adjacent to Merri Creek at the rear of 106 McBryde St Fawkner. However, the actual transfer has not yet taken place, so we hope that Council can reverse its decision. This land is zoned Public Park & Recreation Zone and the width falls short of the 50m-wide corridor specified in the Moreland Open Space Strategy. In return for this strip, Moreland Council agreed to transfer land at Hood St Fawkner which would provide a second road access point to the VicRoads land – allowing residential development of the land. Such a development would be a bad outcome for the amenity of Merri Creek, so it's a mystery as to how it came to be approved so quickly.

FoMC is asking Moreland Council to reconsider its decision before it's too late; but if the swap cannot be stopped, to at least ensure that the corridor along Merri Creek is a full 50m wide.



SWOT events: The newly formed SWOT team (or Special Weed Orchid Terminators) has been working to eliminate the highly invasive South African Weed Orchid (*Disa bracteata*) from Ngarrri-djarrang (Central Creek Grassland). These orchids release thousands of tiny seeds which spread on the slightest of breezes, so they could dominate this wonderful native grassland in the midst of suburban Reservoir – but not if we can help it!! Thanks to MCMC's Michael Longmore for voluntarily leading the SWOT team (Michael is at right in photo). We have applied for funding to ensure that we can do this more thoroughly next year.

Website upgrade: We have contracted Pixelstorm to re-design our website and allow for on-line membership. The new website should be ready by the end of the year.

True Spring arrives in the Wildlife Garden

A wildlife garden puts us in touch with the natural seasons of our land.

But what seasons should we observe? The dominant four-season model originating in northern Europe can be a straitjacket on our perceptions. For instance, in local bushland, the last several weeks of 'winter' are marked by the opening of many kinds of wildflowers and arrivals of migratory birds, forming an extended spring-like season that precedes a burst of flowering, insect activity and birdsong in September and October.

Several attempts have been made to better reflect the divisions of the local year, including ones conjecturing which seasonal events may have been significant to local Aboriginal people. In one of these, Dr Beth Gott used a system of six seasons, where we have just finished Early Spring (approximately mid July to August) and have entered True Spring (September and October).

What wildlife events mark True Spring in the wildlife garden? September is a good month for observing caterpillars – making the most of the lush green growth and humid conditions. The caterpillars of Grass Anthelid moths, often called 'Woolly Bears', are munching tough Spear-grasses in the depot garden. The adult moths can be seen coming to window panes around March when you might admire the extravagant plume-like antennae of the male moth.

Woolly Bear caterpillars are covered in stinging hairs, making them unappetising to most birds; however, cuckoos have learnt to eat them. The Merri is the summer home to several native migratory cuckoos; True Spring on the Merri grasslands and woodlands is heralded by the repetitive calls of Pallid Cuckoos, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo and Fan-tailed Cuckoos. Between eating Woolly Bears, cuckoos are engaged in a scam to lay eggs in the nests of songbirds, co-opting their labour to raise baby cuckoos instead of their own young.

The glimpse of a Woolly bear on the way to the front gate reminds us that this is the time of nesting songbirds and the fraudster cuckoos on the Merri. In a wildlife garden, there are so many more markers of the seasons than we might have learnt at school, and more seasons too!

Brian Bainbridge

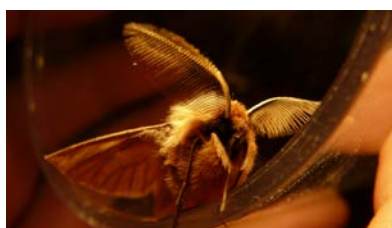
MCMC Ecological Restoration Planner



Small-leaved Clematis- one of the many wildflowers of Early Spring



Woolly Bear Caterpillar in MCMC depot garden



In late summer, the adult of the Woolly bear, a Grass Anthelid moth.



A Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo

...more Merri Musings.....

Donation from Art Exhibition: Thanks lots to artist Hannah Fox who donated \$195 as a percentage of sales from her successful solo art exhibition on High Street Northcote in July. Hannah is a Northcote resident and artist who regularly walks the Merri Creek trail. She said that she was inspired by our bush corridor and she has long admired the work of FoMC.

Photo donations: Thanks too to member Linda Bradburn for donating two beautiful framed photos: a colour Azure Kingfisher by Steve Parrish and a black and white Galada Tamboore by David Tatnall. We aim to hold an auction for these photos at our AGM.

Help plan our 2018 planting activities

*Wednesday 6 December, 6.30pm
MCMC office
2 Lee St
East Brunswick*

All FoMC members are welcome to help plan our planting and maintenance activities for 2018. Pizza and wine supplied.



The poisoned planet

Those who devote themselves to tidying up are driven by a deep concern for the health and beauty of our natural and human environments, and collecting recyclables is a very satisfying part of the task; but they're scarcely scratching the surface of the scourge.

There's estimated to be a tonne of rubbish out there for every human being on Earth, much of it in the oceans or on shores; landfills generating atmosphere-warming methane, toxic waste, radioactive materials which may take thousands of years to become harmless.

In Australia, food and drink containers, even of polystyrene, and paper and cardboard can mostly be recycled, but there is no compulsion for manufacturers to accept them: when oil is cheap, it is used instead of existing plastics, so the latter pile up and become a fire hazard. Worn-out tyres likewise create noxious emissions if burnt; at best they can be incorporated into road surfaces to improve resilience, otherwise what could one do with them.

High-temperature incinerators – with control of the more dangerous gases – can safely dispose of plastic waste; but those huge floating “gyres” of rubbish in the oceans, concentrated by the currents, or the litter on beaches like those of the remote uninhabited Henderson Island in the South Pacific, who will accept the responsibility and the expense of dealing with them?

The various poisonous metals such as cadmium, lead, mercury – that last one spread by coal-burning, I understand – used in a diversity of technical products, how could they be controlled except with a universal register of their sales and ultimate return: incredibly complicated, expensive, hard to enforce, what a double-edged sword “progress” is. None of these were a problem for the Aborigines, the Red Indians, the early South Americans before they were pushed aside by more aggressive races.

And it's their use of these metals that is my main objection to batteries – the environmental harm they cause, almost as great as uranium's (how outdated that word suddenly seems!) in extraction and disposal. Thus I would prefer hydrogen fuel cells to replace oil and gas in powering our land transport; while batteries' limited capacity and life make them a quite inadequate means of storing electrical energy for the very variable renewables, solar and wind – pumped hydro is the outstanding candidate for that, so I'm rapt in the Prime Minister's plan to expand it.

Asbestos, an indefinitely ongoing threat to renovators in Australia, now endangering residents in the vicinity of the Chandler Highway expansion; large amounts carefully removed during home improvements by my family; so much in Victorian school buildings, apparently, that only the most urgent ones can be cleaned up.

Then there was the greatest escape ever for the biosphere, including ourselves, when ozone-layer destroying chlorofluorocarbons were banned ... thankfully our shield against cosmic radiation now appears to be recovering, its loss would have caused more drawn-out suffering and permanent damage than the big rock 65 million years ago, with extinctions, cancers, genetic mutations, disrupted ecosystems: geo-engineering of the deadliest kind.

The remarkable book “Cradle to Cradle” (instead of “... Grave”, i.e. ending up as fresh as when they started) describes the quest for completely planet-friendly materials and manufacturing processes: very difficult, but there have been some successes. So inspiring, to know that it can be done; so depressing, that it rarely will.

Even such basic necessities as agriculture and animal husbandry contribute to our unsustainable impact on the environment, as fertilisers, herbicides, added hormones affect it, and flocks and herds emit enormous quantities of methane. People reducing their consumption of meat and dairy products? Unlikely.

Returning to marine pollution, there was the tragic picture of a dead sea-bird, cut open to reveal the rubbish cluttering its stomach; “nurdles,” tiny plastic pellets which attract toxins to their surface and are easy to swallow for the smallest creatures, contaminating the whole food chain; the warming and acidification of the water, which coral reefs and other ecosystems and life-forms cannot escape, not even the birds whose food sources are affected.

One appreciates the efforts of the organisers of October's Waste Expo to tackle the problem; but across the planet one can't imagine that enough will be done. With unstoppable growth in population and emissions, and increasing consumption of dwindling resources, humanity will be in an ever more desperate situation and quite incapable of cleaning up the mess it has made of the Earth.

Paul Prentice

FoMC Litter Group Coordinator



*Rubbish on the uninhabited Henderson Island in the South Pacific.
Photo: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-4507612/>*

Friends of Edgars Creek Focus

Hello from the Friends of Edgars Creek

At this time of the year we can look back on the planting season that was, and we have continued with our "off season" maintenance activities.

Once again I look back on the year's activities and maintain astonishment at the efforts of our wonderful volunteers! Their efforts (both great and small) have helped to make our 2017 another phenomenal year. A special thanks to our committee: Stephen Northey (Treasurer), Robert Urquhart and Irene Baker (Secretaries) and our other appointed position holders Rob 'Robstock' Burnett (Works manager), Jules (Catering) and Lisa and Ben (Website development and online services); Ben for his good humour at our committee meetings and being a great helper to Rob on planting days). I should also mention Irene's work as our Waterwatch Coordinator (which she does in combination with her role as the FoMC Streamteam Coordinator).

Our key achievements in 2017 – planted almost 6000 plants, Melbourne Water have also added another 4000 or so plants in the Livingstone Street escarpment area. Expansion and infill revegetation works across six sites and formal maintenance activities at another two sites. As I wander around the Edgars I am delighted to see everything has grown another year older; poas have created massive tussocks, redgums, mannas, hop bushes and more have grow fatter in their trunks, foliage denser and reaching further towards the sky; fighting each other in places where they are forced to compete for the light.

I continue to hear the word or idea of our "legacy" being raised in conversations: *"It's amazing here now," "What you guys have done is just insane."* I see the numbers of people utilising the creek reserve and receive so many comments of gratitude for the transformation of the Edgars Creek reserve area in North Coburg and upstream towards Reservoir. The words of thanks convince me to "go again," put more time and energy into FoEC and our activities on the creek. Not to mention how the flush of wattles in spring also helps, how magical it is to see our bushland transform with the many variations of yellow/gold with the acacia species in full bloom; or the perfume of a hillside awash with golden sprays... you have to love our local flora. Or the bursting seed heads of juncus, poas and other grasses – the next generation of self-seeding plants I hope.

Our planning is well and truly in process for 2018! Our latest application for the Melbourne Water Community Grants is in and under consideration – we always keep our fingers crossed for the outcome on these! It is the difference between planting or not! In combination with the Merri Creek Management Committee, FoEC has been engaged in very fruitful discussions with the company planning to extend their foundry site on Norfolk Court (off Newlands Road in North Coburg). Hopefully we will soon see preparation works underway along the easement fenceline (near the recycling facility visible from Livingstone Street). This will be yet another vast area of revegetation on the creek Reserve – what can I say; other than: "GO FoEC!!!"

"See ya on the creek!"

David Pavone

President, Friends of Edgars Creek

The most wonderful by-product of our planting events – a great group of people coming together as a community for a common cause – our environment! (at the Friends of Edgars Creek Planting & "Christmas Party" on 17 September).



Friends of Merri Creek T-Shirts

Kids sizes reduced to clear – now only \$20

There are only a few small sizes left of our cotton T-shirts (Kids sizes 10-14 and Adult size small), so be quick. Here it is stylishly modelled by Suzi Shaw at the bands' gig in December. Grab one for \$20 at the Merri Creek Management Committee office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, or we can post it to you for an extra \$3 (send your address, T-shirt size and credit card details to friendsofmerriecreek@gmail.com – or a cheque made payable to Friends of Merri Creek at PO Box 93 Moreland 3058).



Befriend our Facebook page

Join over 3,000 others and 'like' our wonderful Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/FriendsofMerriCreek then click on 'Like' to get automatic updates to group activities and news.

And we're on Instagram too

Smartphone users with the Instagram app can share photos with #merriecreek #merriecreektrail hashtags at Instagram @friendsofmerriecreek

Dick's Witticisms

More witty one-liners from FoMC Life Member, Dick Harcourt:

Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

This girl said she recognised me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbifore.

N O V E M B E R

Saturday 4: MECCARG* Preparation for Murnong Gathering

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3pm. Melway 18 A11. Phone: Mez 0435 875 100.

Sunday 5 : Litter Clean Up – Reservoir

Downstream of Edwardes Lake, Edwardes St Reservoir, 10am–12noon. Melway 18 D5. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 5 : Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Thursday 9: Frog census with the Friends of Edgars Creek

Reservoir Scout Hall, Leamington St Reservoir, 6–7:30pm. Melway 18 E4. Learn to recognise different frog calls and help collect important data for the frog census. Bookings essential – see www.mcmc.org.au

Saturday 11: MECCARG* Murnong Gathering

Don't miss this unique cultural event. Meet at the old quarry, near the footbridge on the Merri Creek trail between Murray Rd and Bell St Coburg, 11am–2pm. Melway 18 A11. Phone: Mez 0435 875 100. Funded by the City of Moreland.

Sunday 12: Malcolm Creek Tour

East end of Crossdale Green, Craigieburn, 10am–1pm. Melway 387 B6. Friends of Malcolm Creek will show us woodlands, ancient River Red Gums and grasslands. BYO lunch/snacks. Contact Jodi 0407 331 181.

Sunday 12: Waterwatch stall at the Fawcner Festa

CB Smith Reserve, Fawcner from 12 – 4 pm. Melway 17 J2. Come and find waterbugs or make a crafty creature and hear some local frogs.

Tuesday 14: Friends of Merri Creek Annual General Meeting

CERES Lower Merri Room, Roberts St, East Brunswick. See front page for details.

Sunday 19 : Merri Creek Bird Survey 4 for 2017

7 sites along the Merri, 8.45–10.30am. See page 3 for details.

Sunday 19: Flax Lily & Blue-banded Bee Wild Pollinator Count

Moomba Park car park off McBryde St Fawcner (almost opposite Watkins St), 10am–12.30pm. Melway 8 A12. Visit the Lily and Blue-banded Bee project sites, place a Bee Hotel and count our wild pollinators! Refreshments provided. Funded by Victorian Government's Threatened Species Grant and the many generous donors to our crowdfunding campaign!

Sunday 19 : Friends of Edgars Creek Site Maintenance

Meet at the Silurian Cliff site – access from the corner of Spectrum Way and Snapshot Drive, 1–3pm. Melway 18 A8. Maintenance at the Silurian Cliff site. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Friday 24: Waterwatch water quality workshop

Darebin Parklands Environment Centre, end of Separation St, Alphington, 10am–3.30pm. Melway 31 C9. Free training session to become a volunteer Waterwatch monitor on the Darebin and Merri creeks. Bookings essential – see www.mcmc.org.au Proudly supported by the City of Darebin.

Sunday 26 November : Friends of Merri Creek Bird Survey 4 for 2017 (continued)

2 sites along the Merri, 8.45–10.30am. See page 3 for details.

D E C E M B E R

Saturday 2 : MECCARG* End of Year Celebration

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1–3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone: Mez 0435 875 100.

Sunday 3 : Water Quality Testing and Waterbug census at Merri Edgars wetland

Come see the diversity of creatures living in the Merri Edgars wetland, 9–10:30am. Further details by emailing thauslermerri@gmail.com or phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 3: Litter Clean Up – North Coburg

Keady St, 10am–12noon. Melway 17 J8. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 3 : Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Wednesday 6: Help plan FoMC's 2018 Hands-on activities

MCMC office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, 6.30pm. All FoMC members are welcome. Pizza and wine supplied. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

2 0 1 8

JANUARY

Sunday 7 : Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

FEBRUARY

Sunday 4: Litter Clean Up – Nth Fitzroy

Downstream from Rushall Station, 10am–12noon. Melway 30 D11. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 4: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 18: Friends of Merri Creek Bird survey 1 for 2018

At 7 Merri sites, 8.45–10.30am see: FoMC website for details.

Sunday 25: Friends of Merri Creek Bird survey 1 for 2018 (continued)

At 2 Merri sites, 8.45–10.30am see: FoMC website for details.

MARCH

Sunday 4: Sydney Road Street Party

Sydney Road Brunswick, 12–7pm. Check out the FoMC/MCMC stall near Brunswick Town Hall. If you can help staff the stall please ring Ray on 0422 989 166.

Sunday 4: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2–3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.



Participants in the Woody Weed Whacking at Bababi Marning on 20 August 2017 in front of a pile of cut Gorse that they created.

Check the FoMC website for any new events or changes to the above details.

If no contact details given above, phone Ray or Monica at MCMC on 9380 8199.

*MECCARG = Merri & Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group



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Members' contributions are most welcome; please send to friendsofmerriecreek@gmail.com by Friday 8 December 2017