

# Merri e-News

MARCH 2016

Newsletter of the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC)

## The Merri Creek Exhibition rolls on

The launch of the exhibition *Merri Creek - from Wasteland to parklands* at Fitzroy Town Hall Reading Room on 29 January was a jam-packed event. The exhibition celebrates the outstanding community achievement since 1975 in transforming Merri Creek from a weed-smothered drain to a much-loved waterway.



**In March and April** the exhibition is at Craigieburn Library, Hume Global Learning Centre, 75-95 Park Ave, Craigieburn. **In May** it moves to Darebin libraries, and **in June** to Whittlesea (see [website](#) for details).

You can view the story panels on [on-line](#) and the evocative rear panels [here](#).



## 2015 Annual Report out now

2014-15 was another busy year for MCMC with many activities on Merri Creek:

- Plantings, surveys, weed control & ecological burns at over 60 sites.
- 17,815 plants in the ground.
- 39 hands-on community events and interpretative tours.
- Educational & engagement sessions that reached over 9,000 people.
- Work alongside Wurundjeri Elders & the Wurundjeri Narrap team.

Read about these achievements and more in our [latest Annual Report](#).

## Greater Wallan – Merri State Park

*Our Vision: Continuous public parkland and a connected trail along the entire length of Merri Creek.*

The much loved Merri Creek Parklands and the Merri Shared Trail only extend along a **quarter of Merri Creek's length**, from the Yarra confluence to the Metropolitan Ring Road. If you want to go further north you can't! The [Marran Baba Parklands](#) concept makes up another 25% of the creek's length, from the Ring Road to Craigieburn Road. Much of its implementation is still languishing 10 years after release of the Parks Victoria draft plan. This still leaves a huge 50% of Merri Creek waiting for a coherent park plan – from Craigieburn to Wallan. In the absence of a government plan, community organisations have developed a concept plan for the **Greater Wallan – Merri State Park**. Details are [here](#).

## Latest grants

### Melbourne Water Community Grants

Two excellent grants from Melbourne Water will help to improve Merri Creek in the coming 18 months:

**Merri models - restoring riparian remnants in the Merri's industrial reaches:** We have \$30,000 to re-establish Creepline Tussock Grassland and support the regeneration of high value remnant Merri Creek riparian areas which contain locally rare species. The sites are at Rushwood Drive Reserve in Craigieburn and just north of O'Herns Rd in Galgi Ngarrk (Craigieburn) Grassland Reserve.

**Friends of Merri Creek grant - East Brunswick habitats for fauna, flora and people:** Congratulations to Friends of Merri Creek for receiving \$22,919 for planting and weed control along 700m of creek near CERES in East Brunswick. There'll be a **community planting day on Sunday 15 May**. Donations to the Merri Creek Environment Fund are also helping with improvements to this area.

### Dahl Trust Grant to honour Eucalypts

**Connecting Kids: the future protectors of River Red Gums:** We are delighted to have \$13,000 from the Dahl Trust to explore and celebrate all things gum, including running Eucalypt education with students of varying ages that will culminate in a presentation of their ideas about how to protect these iconic trees into the future.



### Threatened Species - Community Volunteer Action Grant

**Matted and Tangled: Fine scale threat reduction for urban Flax-lily populations:** Congratulations to Friends of Merri Creek for receiving \$19,890 to improve the habitat for critically endangered plants at Bababi Djinanang Grassland in Fawkner and Ngarri-djarrang Grassland in Reservoir. The project will also involve VINC, VNPA and Melbourne Polytechnic. The endangered plants are Matted Flax Lily *Dianella amoena*, Rye Beetle-grass *Tripogon loliiformis* and Plains Yam Daisy *Microseris scapigera* s.s. If you would like to be involved please contact us at [admin@mcmc.org.au](mailto:admin@mcmc.org.au) and ask to be put on the project email list.

## Ecological Burns Season

Autumn brings perfect conditions for ecological burns, an essential management tool for maintaining the health of our precious native grasslands. Over the next month we hope to be burning at Ngarri-djarrang Grassland in Reservoir, Bababi Djinanang in Fawkner, Emma St and Lynch Rd grasslands in Fawkner, and a privately owned patch of native grassland next to Merri Creek in Patullos Lane, Craigieburn.

## Habitat Heroes

We're looking forward to the third year of our *Habitat Heroes* project, generously funded by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust. The project aims to restore biodiversity in a habitat gap along the Merri Creek corridor in Fawkner, northern Melbourne, in partnership with Wurundjeri Traditional Owners and the local community. If you want to get involved, come along to the **Mother's Day *Habitat Heroes* Planting & BBQ on Sunday 8 May** East end of Jukes Rd Fawkner, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 18 A2.



## New energy for Merri Park from the community!

The Friends of Merri Creek *Sumner Loving* project has worked hard to engage the community over two years, supported by MCMC. This state government funded project culminated in the *Merri Magical Morning* on 21 February. 120 people enjoyed the Wurundjeri Welcome to Country from Uncle Bill Nicholson, the Djirri djirri Dancers, the butterfly tent, the tour of Merri Park Wetland, and twining toys from local grasses with Adrienne Kneebone. The event also kicked-off the new **Friends of Merri Park** group coordinated by Irena Cassettari. Irena also led a Clean Up Australia Day event at the site on 6 March. If you would like to be a part of the group, contact: [irena.cassettari@gmail.com](mailto:irena.cassettari@gmail.com)

## Industrial Fires impact the Merri



Within a two month period, two industrial fires threatened Merri waterways. In late November 2015, runoff from at [a large fire at an illegally operated wood dump](#) had serious impacts on the ecology of Merri Creek in Somerton and 7km downstream.

*Photo above shows fire site with Merri Creek on far left.*

Then in January 2016, [a tyre recycling facility in Broadmeadows caught fire](#), with runoff entering upper parts of the Merlynston and Campbellfield Creeks, both tributaries of Merri Creek. Fortunately the impacts are far less severe than at Somerton. In both instances, rapid response by Melbourne Water prevented more serious impacts. Read more about the efforts, impacts and longer term issues [here](#).



## Merri-Edgars Wetland Underway

We welcome the construction of a new wetland near the confluence of Edgars and Merri Creeks in Coburg by Moreland City Council. Major excavation works, including the construction of six pond areas are complete and some ponds are already holding water. Planting up will begin soon. For over a decade the Friends of Merri Creek lobbied for a Merri Creek wetland in Moreland. It's pleasing to see this become a reality. More project information [here](#).

## Sewer works along Merri Creek, Coburg

Melbourne Water is rehabilitating the Merri Creek main sewer from north of Bell Street, Coburg to near St Georges Road in Brunswick. The century old sewer has deteriorated significantly and works are needed so it doesn't collapse. At the same time, the system will be improved to reduce the likelihood of sewage spills into Merri Creek during extreme wet weather events.

Pre-planning works will begin early this year at Booth Street and De Chene Reserve in Coburg. The main project will commence mid-2016. The majority of the old sewer will be decommissioned and replaced. Some smaller sections are being relined or augmented. All major work activities will occur

between 7.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday and between 7.00am and 1.00pm Saturday. See details [here](#).

## Staff Changes

Welcome to **Jessica Slade**, who joined our Parkland Management Team as a temporary member in January, and to **Julia Cirillo** who worked with us last year as a Catchment Education Officer. Julia now rejoins us as our Waterwatch Coordinator, job-sharing with Jane Bevelander.

And our thanks to **Daniel Lee** who volunteered many hours through the summer months and made great headway on our backlog of library cataloguing. If you're interested in helping, please contact us.

## MCMC Office-bearer changes

### Farewell Treasurer Allie Dawe

Farewell to our long-serving Treasurer, **Allie Dawe**, who relinquished her role at our February AGM. Allie was Treasurer for 13 years, after starting on the MCMC Committee as a Friends of Merri Creek Representative 17 years ago. We give our thanks to Allie for her tremendous volunteer commitment to the good governance of MCMC and for her sustained contribution to Merri Creek. We wish her well for her new community life in Central Victoria.

### 2016 Office-bearers

A warm welcome to **Ann Sanson**, our new Treasurer. Our other office-bearers are: **Ann McGregor** - President, **Cr Drew Jessop** (Hume) and **Nicole Lowe** - Vice-Presidents, and **Damien Harrison** (Hume) - Secretary. Ann McGregor, Ann Sanson and Nicole Lowe are Friends of Merri Creek representatives. They continue a long tradition of Friends reps volunteering for MCMC's office-bearer roles.

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Acknowledging the Wurundjeri People as the Traditional Custodians of the land of the Merri Merri