

Merri e-News JUNE 2016

Newsletter of the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC)

Merri Creek Special Appeal 2016

We invite you to celebrate forty years of restoring, protecting and enjoying precious Merri Creek bushland by giving a tax-deductible donation to continue this work. [GiveNow](#) with your credit card.

PLANTING UP THE GAP – *Connecting native vegetation habitat along Merri Creek*

Donations in the last two years have given a great start to this Fawkner project. Help us plant up critical habitat gaps.



CARING FOR OUR CREEK – *Sustaining Merri Creek habitat*

Your donation will help make sure precious indigenous plants are not smothered by weeds. New habitat will get the best chance to mature.

The [Merri Creek Environment Fund](#) has more information on these projects and on payment options. Or use your credit card to donate at our [GiveNow site](#).

Habitat Heroes project

We recently completed the second year of our fabulous *Habitat Heroes* project on Merri Creek in Fawkner. Eight community events were held including a community planting with 78 attendees, regular bird surveys, a threatened species talk at the Fawkner Library, and field excursions with students from Pascoe Vale Girls Secondary College and Fawkner's Darul Ulum Girls' School.

We also successfully controlled weeds, assisted natural regeneration. We were

delighted to work with the Wurundjeri Narrap team on ecological burns and to have Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Dave Wandin, give an engaging presentation at the community planting - in the rain!

We look forward to the final year of this project. *Habitat Heroes* aims to reconnect habitat, to connect community to the restoration of Merri Creek biodiversity and to facilitate Indigenous land management. We are grateful to the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust for the project funding.



Merri Creek Exhibition rolls on

The outstanding exhibition *Merri Creek - from Wasteland to parklands* continues to celebrate the



community achievement since 1975 in transforming Merri Creek from a weed-smothered drain to a much-loved waterway.

A successful launch at Northcote Library in early May saw a wonderful Welcome to Country from Uncle Ron Jones and an entertaining talk by local playwright, Patricia Cornelius.

The exhibition was in Darebin for May and then moved to Whittlesea for a great launch at the Pacific Epping shopping centre on 5 June. It is at various Whittlesea libraries for **June** and **July 2016**, then moves on to Melbourne Water in Docklands for **August** and to the Wallan Library in **September** ([details here](#)).

View the [outstanding story panels](#) and the [evocative rear panels](#).

Somerton Fire and Growling Grass Frogs

We feared the polluted fire-water runoff generated from an [industrial waste fire in Somerton](#) in late 2015 would have a terminal impact on nearby populations of endangered Growling Grass Frogs in Merri Creek. Thankfully this is not the case. A report by Growling Grass Frog expert Dr Geoff Heard confirms the frogs have persisted and successfully reproduced at three sites downstream from the tip fire site. It's even possible the frogs benefited because the deoxygenated fire-runoff killed formerly wide-spread European Carp and Redfin Perch, both predators of frog eggs and tadpoles.

It's also possible the massive effort by Melbourne Water to pump fresh water into Merri Creek during and after the fire may have helped the frogs.

Unfortunately the wider picture for the Growling Grass Frog in the middle reaches of Merri Creek is much less rosy. Of an average of 12 sites occupied by Growling Grass Frogs for ten years up to 2012, only 6 were occupied in 2015-16 and of these 6 sites, 3 sites recorded only a single frog.

Merri Creek frontage sell off - Reservoir

Merri Creek Management Committee was greatly concerned when the Education Department announced its intention last year to [sell the site of the former Lakeside Secondary College](#) with its long frontage to Merri Creek near Radford Rd Reservoir. We wrote letters, made submissions and arranged meetings to argue for the creek frontage staying in public ownership. So did the Friends of Merri Creek, Darebin Council and others in the community.

Recently we made a submission at a public hearing of the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee, a body charged with reviewing the proposed rezoning of the site to Industrial Zone. Alas, the terms of reference of this wonderful sounding committee prohibit it from recommending public land use zonings! We strongly supported the call by Darebin Council and many others to retain the valuable area of creek frontage within the public estate. We are encouraged by Darebin Council's recent decision to offer to buy the creek frontage land. We have again written to the state government urging it to save Merri Creek frontage from privatisation.



Sowing the seed for a rare daisy's future

Merri Creek Management Committee has cracked some of the Plains Yam Daisy's 'lifecycle code', expanded its Merri Creek populations and prepared the way for others to follow. Over four years

We learnt that on the Merri Creek:

- plants go dormant during late summer dry periods and regrow rapidly following fires and autumn rains;
- flowers and seed are mainly produced in autumn with a second flowering peak in early summer;

- plants are generally short lived in cultivation but appear to have an indefinite lifespan in the wild; and
- seedlings germinate rapidly following autumn rains when they are vulnerable to slugs and trampling by kangaroos but that copper tape barriers and chicken wire cages are an effective protection.

[Read more.](#)

Frogs on wheels – a successful Waterwatch ride

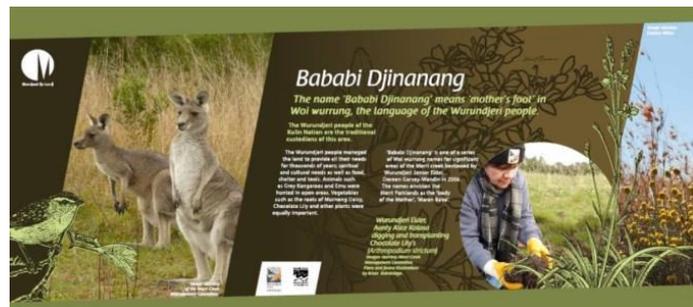
Cyclists young and old joined our Waterwatch Coordinator's, Julia Cirillo and Jane Bevelander, to pedal five kilometres along the Darebin Creek Trail on 30 April 2016, investigating creek health, water bugs and frog species. Participants netted all kinds of weird and wonderful creatures, assessed water turbidity (muddiness), salinity (saltiness) and tried to identify different frogs by their croaks.



Celebrating Bababi Djinanang and the Wurundjeri

We were proud to be a part of Moreland Council's 2016 Reconciliation Week celebrations when Council launched a new interpretive sign

at Bababi Djinanang Native Grassland in Fawkner. A diverse crowd of 60 people, including students from two local primary schools, were welcomed by Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Perry Wandin and listened to the thoughtful words of the Moreland Mayor, Cr Samantha Ratnam. The Mayor recognised the pivotal role played by the Friends of Merri Creek in working with



Wurundjeri Elders to secure Woiwurrung names for a series of grasslands along Merri Creek. MCMC staff assisted enthusiastic students to plant shrubs and grasses, and to get connected with waterbugs. We also provided display materials about our management and regular burning of the Bababi Djinanang Grassland with the Wurundjeri *Narrap* Team.

Help monitor the health of Merri & Darebin creeks

Are you interested in doing regular water quality tests on the Darebin or Merri Creeks within the City of Darebin? You will receive free training, equipment and professional support. Find out more from Julia Cirillo, Waterwatch Coordinator at MCMC on 9380 8199 or juliacirillo@mcmc.org.au Read more about [Waterwatch](#) and check out our [Healthy Waterways page](#).

New Grants – Myer Foundation & Melbourne Water

We are enormously grateful to have received a substantial grant from The Myer Foundation's Sustainability and Environment Capacity Building Stream 2016. This will enable us to undertake much needed strategic and organisational planning to continue building on our achievements and ensure we remain viable and vibrant.

We have secured two Corridors of Green grants from Melbourne Water. One is for weed control and revegetation to encourage the regeneration of Escarpment Shrubland and Streambank Shrubland along Kalkallo and Merri Creeks at Laffan Reserve, south of Kalkallo. The other is to replace weedy vegetation with competitive revegetation to achieve a continuous 3.3 km stretch of

managed indigenous vegetation on the west bank of the Merri Creek in Fawkner. These projects will be rolled out between July 2016 and December 2017.

Lots of Merri community events in winter

There are plenty of planting and weeding events, bird surveys, litter clean-ups and even a [Nature Play](#) session through winter. [Our website calendar](#) lists all the upcoming community events.

Sign up for notification of events by emailing admin@mcmc.org.au or 'like' the [Friends of Merri Creek facebook page](#) for event updates.

To unsubscribe please email admin@mcmc.org.au with Unsubscribe Merri E-News in the subject.

For Enquiries about Merri e-News, email admin@mcmc.org.au or call Ray Radford on (03) 93808199

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