Creek signs put culprits on notice

Fleur Morrison

A NEW network of signs aims to prevent pollution from poisoning plants and animals in the urban section of Darebin Creek.

The signs will instruct people walking or riding along the creek to report water discoloration or expected pollution to the Environmental Protection Authority via a hotline.

Darebin Parklands Association president Graeme Martin said he hoped that by quick reporting of pollution, the creek would provide a healthier habitat for native animals.

"Water quality is recognised as the major factor limiting the return of many native animals," Mr Martin said.

"Pollution that spills into the creek kills small invertebrate animals that are the food source for larger animals.

"We want to put polluters on notice, that from now on, they will have the public observing their indiscretions.

"It's a very long-term vision, but we hope we'll be able to attract the platypus back to urban areas of the creek in the future."

A 2004 report on Melbourne's Rivers and Creeks revealed Darebin Creek was in poor condition in both urban and rural sections.

Dead fish and eels were also found on the banks of the creek as the result of a spill of an unknown substance last October.

An EPA investigation could not identify the source of the spill because it had not been reported quickly enough.

Darebin Creek Management Committee co-ordinator Adrian Infanti said that brown, green and white water and foam had been seen in the creek during the past three years.

"The cause of these pollution events is people who deliberately or accidentally flush chemical, construction and industrial wastes into the stormwater system that flows into Darebin Creek," Mr Infanti said.

About 20 signs will be placed near stormwater drain outlets along the creek that are considered high-risk, including those originating near industrial estates.

People who see pollution in the creek can phone the EPA hotline on 9695 2777.