

How 'mother of the park' helped grow a suburban oasis from a tip

By CAROLYN WEBB

A drain is told in a new book, *Darebin Parklands: Escaping the*

Claws of the Machine.

In May 1973, Mrs Course and

friend Annea Fleming took

their children to play at Rock-

bear Park on the creek's Ivan-

hoe side.

Much of the park was "deser-

ted and derelict, a wasteland of

weds" but they were horrified

to see Board of Works bulldozers

falling the remaining trees.

The women made angry calls

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offered the council a dollar-for-

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School children and the

unemployed helped to weed

and plant. "There were trail

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Darebin Parklands: Escaping the

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Darebin Parklands: Escaping the

Claws of the Machine is available at

www.dpa.org.au



Sue Course at the duck pond at Darebin Parklands yesterday. INSET: The rubbish tip in 1973 that she helped turn into the pond.

PICTURE: PAT SCALA

SUE Course retired from the Darebin Parklands committee last year after 37 years' unpaid work helping convert the park from a rubbish tip into an inner city Eden.

But she can't rest on her laurels. She finds that "when-

ever I go for a walk, I always find

weds; I pull them out as I go".

The book, by historian Dr

Sarah Mirams, tells how the

group lobbied the media and

local politicians nervous about

their marginal seats in a loom-

ing state election. With little

funding the volunteers planted

3500 native trees in four years.

Mrs Course says the greatest

achievement was securing the

greater tract of land west of the

creek on the Alphington side.

After a 1974 federal funding

submission failed, Mrs Course

flew to Canberra with her four

children and convinced the

Whidam government to buy 4.7

hectares to the north proposed

for housing. Northcote council

bought 7.2 hectares, including

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