



February information evening

Helen Maconachie, Melbourne Water's river health officer for the Darebin Creek catchment, will speak at the DPA's next information evening, on Tuesday 23 February. Helen will speak about Melbourne Water's successful creek rehabilitation and erosion control works in the parklands and also provide a rundown of other improvement projects along the Darebin Creek. The meeting starts at 8 pm, in the parklands environment centre, Separation Street, Alphington. All welcome.

Picnics, pics and a gong

We are relaxed and refreshed at DPA HQ after a restful holiday season, and have already kicked off the new year with the Junior Ranger camp out and started planning our major annual event, the Darebin Parklands Picnic Races.

The Picnic Races is always a fun day with more than a few laughs guaranteed as young and old try their hand at sack racing, egg tossing and more. Our new event coordinator Ann Ritchie is looking for volunteers to spend an hour helping out on the day, so please contact Ann at info@dpa.org.au if you can assist.

Our annual photography exhibition, featuring winners and entrants from the 2009 photography competition, has just finished its stint at Fairfield Library, after also being on display at the environment centre.

Congratulations to the winners, Michael Mann and Anthony Jones in the adult categories, and Tessa Jones, Alex Alder and Daniel Jones in the Junior Ranger sections. A big thank you to Leader Community Newspapers' Josie Hayden and

Terry Murphy from Kommune Photography School in Alphington, who judged the entries and the Mayor of Banyule, Cr Tom Melican, who presented the awards.

In other news we are proud to report that veteran DPA member Cath Sloan received a Jagajaga Community Australia Day Award from the Member for Jagajaga, Jenny Macklin, last month. Read all about it on page 4.

Annual DPA subscriptions fall due at the start of each calendar year, so if you'd like to continue to support the parklands, please re-join using the form at the back of this newsletter. We've now introduced electronic payment to make it even easier for you to pay your subscription. And as an added bonus, when you sign up you get a free DPA logo cap, t-shirt (limited sizes available) or sports bottle, which you can collect from us at any DPA event.

Ingrid Svendsen
President

DPA events 2010

February 23 Information evening
March 14 Darebin Parklands Picnic Races
April 16 Junior Ranger wildlife spotlighting
May 16 Park care day
May 25 Information evening
June 6 Park care day
July 18 Park care day
August 20 Junior Ranger bonfire night
August 31 Information evening
October 10 Kids Catch a Carp Day
November 30 Information evening
December 5 Park care day





Unlucky ducks

Hello members,

Although we have had a mild summer to date the 11 January heat had a massive impact on the park. On that day we recorded a peak temperature of 44.6 C here in the shade, yet in direct sun it was 59.4 C and that is where our problems started.

The extreme temperature and other associated conditions caused a botulism outbreak in the leachate system. When I say leachate system I'm referring to the networks of ponds on the old tip site including the duck pond. Botulism causes paralysis in waterfowl, so a lot of ducks were drowning, unable to lift their heads out of the water, or being taken by foxes at night, unable to move. We euthanized over 40 ducks and found around 60 dead just in the top wetland on the tip site. We have lost over 80 per cent of our duck population in three days. Of the ducks we nursed in our tool shed duck hospital only two recovered well enough to be released back into the park.

So it was a rough week, and the week our new ranger Rohen Davis started. Rohen's first day was the 11 January and her first week was one of dead and dying ducks. Not a great first week although she has survived and is learning the ropes of the park very quickly.

Rohen is from northern NSW and has recently been working as a bush crew member with the Merri Creek Management Committee. She is a very keen bush land regenerator as opposed to revegetator (planting) and believes in letting sites naturally regenerate. Don't be afraid to say g'day if you see her in the park.

In early February the Darebin Creek Management Committee is planning to put 13 new-style seats throughout the park, some in new locations and others replacing old and damaged seats.

We have installed seven new spiritual healing plaques around the park that Darebin Council funded. They cost \$6,000, so we have covered them with a so-called vandal-proof plastic and had a professional install them

onto rocks. So far the Darebin Parklands vandals haven't damaged them, so let's hope they leave them be. So the parklands' master plan recommendations are being implemented and the park's getting strong funding from council.



Photo: Peter Wiltshire

As you might well have seen, Melbourne Water has finished the earthworks on both projects along the creek and constructed 100 metres of fencing at the Reflection Pool (above) in preparation for the planting of 9,000 plants in the winter. The fence will continue around another 400 metres following the tree line on the floodplain and will act as a temporary planting protection barrier for the newly planted tree, shrubs and grasses. The fence will be removed when the plants are established.

In other news the DCMC now has a new depot site located within the Darebin Enterprise Centre to the south of the parklands. We now store our tractor and large equipment at this site. We have also taken delivery of a fire fighting/planting trailer, which will solve the plant watering issues we have struggled with in the past.

The mild summer so far has been a blessing and the rainfall a real bonus but the conditions are still dangerous regarding fire in the park. We will continue to do our best to manage the fire threat but ask locals to stay on guard and be aware of the risk.

Seeya in the park,

Peter Wiltshire
Ranger in charge





Junior Ranger News!

Junior Ranger camp out

With damper making, a yummy campfire dinner, a personal spotlight tour and of course the chance to camp in the parklands, tickets to the Junior Ranger camp out are always in hot demand.

As this edition of DPA News was being produced in early February, a group of lucky prize winners enjoyed their treat in the parklands.

Congratulations to Elizabeth G, Rebecca G, Hugo L-K, Liam H, Lily M and Sam F. We'll bring you photos and stories of their camp out in our next edition.

All Junior Ranger members are eligible to enter the prize draw to win tickets to the camp out. The prize is drawn late in the year – watch the newsletter for details.

Park wildlife in the spotlight

Tawny frogmouths, possums, flying foxes, eels and spiders are just some of the critters we encounter when ranger Peter Wiltshire leads a nocturnal ramble at the Junior Ranger wildlife spotlighting walk. This year's event will be held on Friday April 16. Mark the date in your calendar now and check the next edition of DPA News for all the details.

Get set for the Picnic Races

The fun and games of the Darebin Parklands Picnic Races returns on Sunday 14 March, from 12 noon – 4 pm. Bring your picnic lunch and try your hand at the boot toss, sack races, egg throw and more. With the King and Queen of the Mountain challenge up Mt Puffalo and Kinder Corner games for the littlies, there is something for everyone.

Can you spare an hour to assist the DPA to run the event? We need people to help with the games and on the membership desk. If you can assist, please contact the event co-ordinator, Ann Ritchie, at info@dpa.org.au.

Plant nursery a new growth industry



Michael and Jemimah plant their seeds...

Photo: Meredith Schaap

Most of the seeds planted at last November's plant nursery park care day have sprouted, thanks to the care of our DPA growers. We have some Gold Dust Wattle, Native Sarsaparilla, Wedge-leaf Hop Bush and Eucalyptus growing well, but have not had much luck with the Carex Appressa (Tall Sedge) or Clematis.

Now that the plants have sprouted the growers will be 'thinning' each tube by removing all but the strongest plant. This will help that plant to receive all the water and nutrients and result in a healthier tree. Many thanks to our growers for caring for the seedlings over Summer: Simone S, Janette K, Streader family, Nguyen family, Massey family, Cath S, Rogers family, Revill family, and Perry Svendsen family. We look forward to planting the trees in the parklands, or donating them to local schools in the catchment area.

– **Karina Rook, nursery co-ordinator**



...look at the difference six weeks later!

Photo: Darren Streader





Monday volunteers going strong

Each Monday for the last six months has seen three or more dedicated volunteers weeding and planting in the Hidden Valley. We have rescued many plants strangled by weeds and found it especially exciting to discover the amount of re-seeding going on in the area.

Many thanks to the faithful Barry Arnstein, who has the added burden of pushing the heavy wheelbarrow with all our equipment up and down Pine Ridge, and to the other regulars Cath Sloan and Sue Kelly for turning up in all sorts of weather and working so hard. Thanks also to Peter Wiltshire for all his support on this project.

– **Sue Course, committee member**

Award for DPA veteran Cath Sloan

Congratulations to veteran DPA member Catherine Sloan, who was last month presented with a Jagajaga Australia Day Award by the Federal Member for Jagajaga and the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin.

The citation reads:

“Catherine first signed up as an enthusiastic volunteer of the Darebin Parklands Association in 1975, which at that time had only been running for two years. Since then Catherine has played an enormous role in maintaining and improving local parklands, in addition to the organisation of special activities for children. For the past 34 years Catherine has been a diligent volunteer helping to weed and plant native vegetation for which she has developed quite an expertise.

In recent years Catherine has helped coordinate and participate in weekly park care days at the parklands. Her contribution to the preservation of this vital community and environmental asset is something that is appreciated by the many families that visit the park each week.”

On behalf of the committee and members of the DPA I'd like to thank and congratulate Cath for her outstanding achievements.

– **Ingrid Svendsen, president**

DPA action helps tame weed menace

DPA intervention has secured action on several outbreaks of the noxious weed boneseed along the railway reservation around Ivanhoe. The invasive yellow-flowered South African weed was eliminated from the parklands 20 years ago thanks to a massive community weeding effort that included children picking up to 500 plants as part of a “boneseed hunt”.

The DPA has been deeply concerned that the community's hard work was at risk because train company Connex had not effectively managed the weed, resulting in three outbreaks along railway reservation, one only 200 metres from the parklands.

With the support of the Banyule Council, the DPA approached Connex last October seeking urgent action. We are pleased to report that Connex responded rapidly. It arranged an on-site meeting with committee member Sue Course late last year, and instructed its maintenance contractor Mainco to poison the weed at all three sites.

The DPA has asked the new state rail contactor, Metro, to arrange follow-up poisoning of a secondary infestation near Ivanhoe station.

We are also worried about a large plant growing on private property in Ivanhoe, which seems to be a source of the outbreak. Unfortunately, Banyule Council cannot require the owner to remove it and is discussing options with the Department of Primary Industries. We will update you on progress in future newsletters.

All DPA members can help protect the parklands and other native bushland. Check your garden for boneseed and discuss the issue with any neighbours that may have boneseed on their properties. Go to www.dpi.vic.gov.au for fact sheets and other information on boneseed.

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Darebin Parklands Association – 2010 Membership Application

Junior Ranger Members	Parents and Other Members
Family Name: _____	Family Name: _____
First Name(s): _____ _____	First Name(s): _____ _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I would like to receive DPA news and updates by email (please print clearly)

Membership Type	Cost	Qty	Total
Junior For all kids who want to have fun and contribute to the park.	\$2		
Concession Unwaged, seniors and students	\$10		
Individual One person	\$15		
Family One or more adults plus Junior Rangers, from the same household or family.	\$20		
Corporate	\$50		
Donations Donations of \$20 or more are tax deductible. Make your cheque out to our partner Landcare Australia Ltd and you will receive a tax receipt.			
Return this form and payment to: The Treasurer, DPA, PO Box 3, Ivanhoe 3079 Please make cheques payable to: Darebin Parklands Association Inc. Or pay us directly (add your name as a reference): BSB 633108 Acc 116325457			

My interests are: <input type="checkbox"/> Urban parks <input type="checkbox"/> Plants <input type="checkbox"/> Animals / Birds <input type="checkbox"/> Geology <input type="checkbox"/> Other...	I can help out with: <input type="checkbox"/> Planting/Horticulture <input type="checkbox"/> Event organising <input type="checkbox"/> Development projects <input type="checkbox"/> Grants/fundraising <input type="checkbox"/> Other...	Office use only Date: Payment received by: Payment by cheque / cash / direct credit Database: New / Renew
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