



**1973 – 2008  
Celebrating 35  
years of caring  
for Darebin  
Parklands**

**November 2008**

## DPA News

### **Our conservation neighbours**

La Trobe University's Melbourne Wildlife Sanctuary, just up the creek from Darebin Parklands, contains an amazing array of native birds and animals. At our next information evening on Tuesday 25 November, at 8 pm, in the environment centre, Separation Street, Alphington, education and information coordinator Andrew Stocker will tell us about the sanctuary's conservation work. Andrew will also give his perspective on the importance of conservation parks like ours. All welcome.

### **Big year ends with a bang**

With four events coming up over the next few weeks, including the judging of our photographic competition and our annual Kids' Catch-a-Carp Day, the DPA will be ending the year with bang.

It is no exaggeration to say that 2008 has been one of the most challenging years the DPA has experienced. It's been tough responding to the parklands' master plan and advocating for the association's long standing policy of protecting the parklands' wildlife and conservation values.

I'd like to thank every member who assisted with the DPA's master plan campaign. Without your voices raised in support of the parklands' role as a wildlife haven, Darebin Council's decision would undoubtedly have been much worse. Within 12 months the council will evaluate its decision to fence the Darebin floodplain as a dog exercise area to see whether it delivers claimed conservation and safety benefits. We hope this evaluation leads to a better outcome for the parklands.

The good news is the finalisation of the master plan, which contains recommendations for \$1.4 million in

investment in the parklands. The DPA will work with Darebin and Banyule councils to ensure these benefits are delivered.

Our Action Plan member survey, to which many of you contributed, will guide our future activities, including master plan implementation projects. Details on page 5.

I hope you can join us at our coming events, including the award ceremony for our inaugural photography competition, after the park care day on 16 November.

As this is the final newsletter for the year I'd like to thank you all for your support throughout 2008. Thanks are also due to the DPA committee, and to park staff, especially head ranger Peter Wiltshire, whose efforts this year have been exceptional. And finally, our gratitude goes to Sylvia Beu for her generous donation.

**Ingrid Svendsen  
President**

### **DPA events 2008/2009**

**November 16** Park care day/photo comp  
**November 22** Kids' Catch-a-Carp Day\*  
**November 25** Information evening  
**February 24** Information evening  
**February 14** Darebin Council movie night  
**March 1** Clean Up Australia Day  
**March 22** Darebin Parklands Picnic Races  
**April 24** Junior Ranger wildlife spotlighting\*  
**May 26** Information evening  
**June 7** Park care day (World Enviro Day)  
**July 26** Park care day (National Tree Day)  
**August 25** Information evening  
**August 28** Junior Ranger bonfire night\*  
**September 6** Park care day  
**October 11** Kids' Catch-a-Carp Day  
**November 24** Information evening  
**November 29** Park care day

*\* DPA members' event (guests/non members are welcome to join at the event)*





### Photo comp winners unveiled

Entries for the first ever DPA photography competition have closed. The photographs, which highlight the beauty of the parklands and ways people enjoy them, have been sent to two independent professional photographers for judging.

All DPA members and the community are invited to the exhibition opening and award ceremony on Sunday 16 November at 3 pm at the parklands' environment centre.

The top 13 photographs will be published on the 2009 DPA calendar that will be available for purchase. If you would like a copy (or few) of the calendar, please complete the attached order form. Get in quickly as there will only be a limited number of calendars available.

– Graeme Martin

### New 'roo at home in the 'Ho

Darebin Parklands has achieved another important milestone in its development as a wildlife haven, with last month's sighting of a healthy Eastern Grey kangaroo near the Rockbeare Park entrance to the park.

DPA founder Sue Course says it is the first time a kangaroo has been spotted on the Ivanhoe side of the park and that this is a tribute to the community's work in revegetating and caring for the parklands.

DPA members the Dober-Gillespie family, who reported the sighting last month, are also thrilled. They've dubbed the 'roo Max, after their eagle-eyed Junior Ranger son, who was the first to spot him.

Max is the fourth kangaroo to take up residence in the parklands in the last year. There are two 'roos living on the Alphington side of the park, one near the duck ponds and the other near the main leachate pond.

If you see the Max or the other 'roos please appreciate them from a distance and do not stress them by approaching. Also, a reminder that the Ivanhoe side of the park is a dog on-leash area. Please help keep Max safe by keeping dogs leashed.

### Parklands events guide launched

The DPA's new guide to community events and environmental activities in Darebin Parklands was launched at our 35th birthday party in September, attended by Darebin mayor Cr Peter Stephenson, Aboriginal elder Uncle Reg Blow and Banyule Council parks manager Peter Benazic.

Funded by an Australia Post-Landcare grant, the guide contains information about the DPA's Junior Ranger Club and events such as bonfire night, the Darebin Parklands Picnic Races, Kids' Catch-a-Carp Day and community park care days.



Members and supporters received a copy by mail last month. It is on the DPA's website at [www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au) and is also available through Banyule and Darebin councils' service centres and websites, as well as at the parklands' environment centre.

The guide is a great resource for people who want to get more involved in the parklands and do something positive for the environment.

### Get growing at the park care day

The ever-popular plant nursery park care day is on Sunday 16 November, from 1-3 pm, at the parklands' environment centre. Help plant seeds into tubes, then take a box home to care for. Watch them grow into native grasses, shrubs and trees to be planted at the parklands, and farms and schools along the creek. Don't worry if you're no green thumb; our experts will be on hand to help.







## Still growing strong after 35 years



The DPA celebrated 35 years of caring for Darebin Parklands in September. Our special guests Darebin mayor Peter Stephenson, Aboriginal elder Uncle Reg Blow and Banyule Council parks manager Peter Benazic (pictured, above left, with DPA president Ingrid Svendsen) planted a commemorative tree at our Ivanhoe planting site before founder Sue Course (above) cut the cake.



Pictures: Anthony Jones, Peter Harvey





## Writing's on the wall for vandals

Hello members,

You might have noticed and vandals and graffiti taggers have been attacking surrounding neighborhood and the parklands since the beginning of October, much to our frustration. I don't know what it is about October/November but history shows that these are our worst months for the moron brigade. The graffiti tagging really fires us up, and now they are tagging trees and natural features around the park. Buildings and signs are one thing, but graffiti on natural things is another. So we are on the lookout and doing after hour patrols in an effort to catch them.

Speaking of morons, Matt and I caught four year 12 students at Pobblebonk Pond recently drinking beer and smashing their empty stubbies into and around the wetlands. They also pulled out all the stakes and several plants. Both of us were trembling in anger as these idiots challenged us and dismissed our complaints. Matt and I took photos of these clowns and the next day went to all the local secondary schools and met with the principals, hoping for their identities to be exposed so we could pursue them with police. All the schools were very co-operative but we had no luck identifying these kids. They are obviously locals but don't go to school around here.

Darebin Council has been great helping us clean up the mess, particularly the graffiti on the buildings and signs.

The master plan has finally been completed and although it was equivalent to getting teeth pulled I think in the long term the pain will have been worth it. As we say here, everybody seems unhappy so we must have got the balance right.

Melbourne Water has agreed to fund another major revegetation project along the creek, upstream of the Reflection Pool, and an area downstream below the steepest part of the Rockbeare slope. Work will include minor earthworks to reduce compaction at the sites. Contractors will

undertake the works as both DCMC and DPA have too many projects on the go to undertake any more next year.

I have asked ranger Matt to come to the next DPA meeting to give members a training spiel on the very noxious Alligator Weed, a weed of national significance that is in the Darebin Creek and parklands. It's important that as many people as possible can help identify this plant because of its threat to Australian waterways.

Over the next month we will be undertaking works at the Ivanhoe wetlands to put in the pipes for the hydraulic ram that we will be installing over summer near the Crossing Stones. It is planned that this pump will provide top up water from the creek for the wetland, reducing our reliance on the big, noisy diesel pump we currently use. Hydraulic rams require no fuel or electricity, run quietly and use the simple fall of the creek to pump.

Finally snakes are being sighted daily and all over the park and at some local houses as well. If you see a snake in the park, don't panic. Enjoy them if you can as they are amazing creatures. If you're not a snake fan and don't know what to do, follow these tips and you'll be fine. Stand still, keep eye contact and in most situations the snake will slither away. But if it's a classic standoff, do the above but, while maintaining eye contact, slowly but surely move directly away from the snake. The snake will feel less threatened and you will have an adventure to tell someone without being bitten. If you find a snake in your house or yard, remember it is illegal to kill it so call a professional snake catcher such as Jon Birkett on 0411 638 787. Jon's the head keeper at the zoo and will advise you and catch any snake causing you grief. Please note we are no longer allowed to catch snakes, as it is apparently an OH&S issue.

Seeya in the park,

**Peter Wiltshire**  
**Ranger in charge**







## Junior Ranger News

### Kids' Catch-a-Carp Day

Kids' Catch-a-Carp Day is on Saturday 22 November, so dust off those fishing rods. This is a family event where we break up into teams to fish for carp along the Darebin Creek. European carp are a problem in the Darebin Creek because they stir up mud and feed on bugs on the creek floor, creating an inhospitable home for native fish and damaging aquatic plants.

Please come along and register for the event at 9.15 am, then get some fishing tips before heading out for to fish around 10 am. Bring your own rods (we have a few to lend) and suitable footwear. We will provide a free barbecue lunch around midday.

Feel free to invite your friends along, and if they are not already DPA members they can participate by joining on the day for \$2.

### JR camp out – be in it to win it!

Remember to bring your Junior Ranger card to our next park care day, on Sunday 16 November, so you can enter the end of year prize draw and have a chance to win a ticket to the fantastic Junior Ranger camp out. With a camp fire dinner, your own personal spotlight walk and a night under the stars, this is a prize everyone wants to win!

## News in brief

**Council candidates quizzed** Darebin and Banyule councils go to the polls this month. During their next three year term successful candidates will make some important decisions about Darebin Parklands, including the implementation of the parklands master plan. The DPA has asked all Banyule and Darebin council candidates to submit a 100 word statement outlining their vision for the parklands. The DPA will not endorse candidates. We will publish statements on our website later this month, along with the names of candidates that do not submit a statement. Statements from the successful candidates will remain on the website as record of their commitment.

**New project site blooms** Wildflowers planted earlier in the season at the DPA's Ivanhoe floodplain revegetation project are flowering already.

The site, downstream from the Clifton Bridge, looks fantastic, after planting days held in August and September. Around 3,000 grasses, groundcovers, shrubs and trees have gone in so far, and planting will continue down to the Ivanhoe wetlands next year.

The DPA is grateful to all the groups that have helped plant at the site, including Global Club and Darebin DOG's. The project is funded by Melbourne Water, and is supported by Banyule Council.

**Action Plan update** We now have the results of the survey for the DPA's 2009 to 2011 Action Plan. This survey was sent to all members, so that we can get your guidance on projects for the DPA to undertake over the next three years.

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey – more than 30% of our membership base. This is the first time we have done a survey online. We used [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and loved it, and hope you all found it easy to use.

There was an overwhelming preference for environmental initiatives, such as revegetation and improving water quality. There were also many votes to support a new environmental education centre, by developing a concept plan and starting the search for funding. Having more wildlife walks in the park was also a popular idea.

It is very useful for the DPA committee to be directed by these survey results in developing the next Action Plan. We are currently working on a draft and hope to have this released by early 2009.

If you participated in the survey, and want to see the results, please email me at [karina\\_rook@hotmail.com](mailto:karina_rook@hotmail.com).

– **Karina Rook, vice-president**





## Member feedback

### Parklands mystery

Dear DPA,

Just a short note to say thank you for your kind words when you presented me with a certificate of life membership. I value it greatly, although I'm not sure I deserve it. The parklands have always been special to us since we moved to Ivanhoe in 1973. This was before the MMBW got to work. At the time I was a teacher at Strathmore High School and knew what concreting the Moonee Ponds Creek meant, so I was soon involved in the Rockbeare Park Conservation Group.

There is one little story which I have not seen printed but is worthy of note somewhere. These are the only answers that I know. Someone else might know more than I do and be prepared to talk!

There is a significant mound near the north-western entrance to the park.

Where did it come from? The answer is, nobody knows or nobody's telling!

Who put it there? Ditto!

When was it put there? In the middle of the night, starting around midnight, continuing until many, many truck loads of yellow clay were dumped there. I think that there was even a bulldozer on site. It created a terrible noise. We lived nearby and were woken up by it!

All of this happened in the early hours of one morning and that was it.

This was before that area was annexed into the park, probably sometime between 1974 and 1976. The only feasible explanation that I have heard of these events is that the yellow clay had been extracted from a building site, probably in the city, and illegally dumped.

The mounds were tidied up into a shapely form at a later stage.

Cheers,

**Murray Seiffert**  
**Ivanhoe**

*Any clues to the mystery? Email us at [info@dpa.org.au](mailto:info@dpa.org.au) – Ed*

### Birthday wishes

Dear DPA,

Congratulations on 35 years. Sorry I couldn't make the celebration but thank you for your invitation. I trust you all had a lovely afternoon.

I also wanted to say that the association has done a wonderful job in creating such a magical city bushland over these 35 years and I feel blessed to be able to enjoy this magic.

Cheers and kind regards,

**Marilyn Johnston**  
**Fairfield**

### Heritage listing for Clifton Bridge

The Clifton Bridge, designed and built by the DPA in 1979 is one of the parklands' most loved features, and now it is set for official heritage protection. The DPA is delighted that Darebin Council has listed the bridge in its Darebin Heritage Study. The study described the bridge as a notable rare example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century citizen-initiated improvement project. Thanks for DPA vice-president Karina Rook and committee member Sue Course for nominating the bridge.

### Memberships now due!

DPA subscriptions are due at the start of each calendar year. If you'd like to keep supporting our community activities and work in the parklands, please fill out and return the attached membership form.

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