



History in the making

Help the DPA make history at our **annual general meeting on Tuesday 27 February** at 8 pm, in the rangers' office, Separation Street, Alphington. We're commissioning an official history of our organisation and we need your input. We'll be having a slide show of some great moments in DPA history, and we're also inviting members to bring along their one favourite photo of an activity, person or place in the park. We're hoping to generate a lively discussion and get some great ideas for our history project.

Big plans for the park

Welcome to another exciting year with the DPA. As you'll see as you read through this newsletter, there's lots happening in the park over the next four weeks. Coming up are movie night, Clean Up Australia Day and the not to be missed Darebin Parklands Picnic Races. Details are on page 5.

Also coming up is our AGM on 27 February. If you've enjoyed the activities we've held in the park over the last few years, the AGM is your chance to step up and join our committee and help us to run events and projects. No special skills are required – all you need is a willingness to work as a team and an enthusiasm for looking after the park. All financial members are eligible to join the committee (you can renew your membership on the night).

As many of you know, 2006 was an amazing year for the DPA. We won three major environmental awards, including one that came with an \$8000 cheque. We successfully helped the Darebin Creek Management Committee to lobby Banyule Council to fund a

management plan for the park. That process will start soon, so watch out for details of the consultation. The DPA will play an active role in developing the plan, which will cover vital issues such as better balancing the needs of dogs and their owners and other park users.

DPA lobbying last year also saw Banyule Council generously agree to contribute \$25,000 for park projects, including the new Pobblebonk Pond wetlands on the Ivanhoe side of the creek. Other projects are likely to include repairing the "goat track" that leads from Rockbeare Grove down to the crossing stones and upgrading the Rockbeare Grove entrance.

In 2006 the DPA signed off on our new three year action plan, which includes projects such as continuing our successful plant nursery, revegetating the Yarana Road frontage in Alphington and maintaining our calendar of community events and Junior Ranger activities.

We look forward to your company in 2007.

Graeme Martin
President

DPA events 2007

February 17 Movie night
February 27 Annual General Meeting
March 4 Clean Up Australia Day
March 18 Picnic Races
May 20 Park Care Day
May 29 Information evening
June 17 Park Care Day
August 28 Information evening
September 16 Park Care Day
November 25 Park Care Day
November 27 Information evening





Photo: Graeme Martin

Alphington chainsaw massacre

Work on the DPA's new revegetation site, the rundown Yarana Road frontage in Alphington, got underway in spectacular style at last November's Park Care Day with the chainsawing of a number of dead trees. A hardy band of volunteers, led by ranger Pete Wiltshire, gave the site a good clear out in preparation for later planting. The area, which has had little work done on it in more than 20 years, will be transformed over the next few years into a grassy woodland environment. This will provide habitat for native birds including lorikeets and eastern rosellas.

On a more tranquil note at the Park Care Day a dozen or so volunteers also planted around 14 boxes of native grasses and seedlings as part of the DPA plant nursery project. Volunteers took the seedlings home to nurture them for several months. They will eventually grow into around 600 plants, some of which will be used in the park including at the Yarana Road site, while others will go to schools along the creek.

Wildlife guru says live and let live

Golf balls and fishing line work; rubber snakes don't. That's the verdict of Ian Temby, State Government wildlife damage control officer, on ways to stop swallows building nests where you don't want them.

The pragmatic Ian, who spoke at the DPA's November information evening, recommends some lateral thinking when dealing with wild invaders such as swallows. A golf ball in the nest to make them think it's already occupied; some taut fishing line to prevent access to roosting places and a shelf to catch droppings.

Best known for engineering the relocation of endangered grey headed flying foxes from the Botanic Gardens, Ian believes in peaceful coexistence whenever possible.

He says home owners should learn to live with possums as trapping them is pointless (he knows of one man who trapped 70 in a year). Instead, householders should look at low-voltage electric fences, floppy wire fencing and tree collars. If all else fails, call a pest controller.

"If you live in a treed suburb, you are going to have possums. Trapping doesn't solve the problem; it just puts it off temporarily."

He says netting is the only effective way to protect fruit trees from native birds such as rainbow lorikeets. He recommends knitted netting stretched tightly on a frame as loosely draped nylon netting can entangle and kill birds and flying foxes.

Ian says he and his family have lived happily with venomous native snakes in their Templestowe backyard and says many gardens (and ceilings) will have reptilian visitors, whether or not the humans are aware of it. But he adds that as long as people don't try to catch or kill snakes they are not likely to be hurt.

Ian Temby's book *Wild Neighbours: the Humane Approach to Living with Wildlife* (Citrus Press) is available in book stores and online.





First the good news...

Hello DPA members,

Well the good news is the mulberries and other historical trees are alive due to fortnightly watering. We have been soaking the drip zones of these trees with 400 litres of creek water, yet they still are struggling with the drought. We recently augured down 600mm on the floodplain near the footbridge and it was bone dry. I can't help but admire the plants that are surviving, especially the manna gums and old river reds.

The bad news is that 80 per cent of plantings undertaken last year have succumbed due to the lack of rain. The Ivanhoe Primary School plantings and the Westpac site are the exceptions, although these sites have suffered losses. Some of the DPA sites are doing OK as well.

In January we finished constructing the park's new wetlands, Pobblebonk Pond (pictured below). In an amazing stroke of luck, two days later it rained and the stormwater drain-fed pond filled up.



If you haven't yet seen the new wetland then wander down and check it out. It's on the Ivanhoe side of the creek, near the railway bridge. Katherine is currently planting aquatics and while there are no Pobblebonk frogs yet our first sign of wildlife is a new resident Hoary Grebe along with damselflies and dragonflies. This new area is a no dog or cat zone.

The new parklands brochure is finally out, so feel free to drop in to the office to get a copy. We've also been busy installing the discovery trail markers that link with the map on the brochure. We have finished writing up the fact sheets so now visitors can have self-guided tours at their leisure. Thanks to Sue for the history and Eve for her editing (and accusing me of comma abuse, which I'm working to rectify).

The management plan has become a master plan as the Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC) decided that such a plan would be more helpful in the long term. The DCMC steering group has developed a brief and will be selecting a consultant in the next few weeks. Public consultation is a large part of the project, so this is your chance to have your say. I'll keep you informed of progress and how you can get involved.

I hope that we can have a bonfire night some time in April as I have a lot of piles of timber and weeds sitting around and I need to burn them soon. We will be putting free firewood in the second car-parking bay in Yarana Rd from now on, so if you need some keep an eye out.

Seeya in the park,

Peter Wiltshire
Head ranger

DPA prez bags Aussie Day award

DPA president Graeme Martin has received a well-deserved accolade for his "tireless work" for the park. Graeme last month received a Jagajaga Community Australia Day Award for his "outstanding initiative and commitment" from Federal Member for Jagajaga Jenny Macklin. On behalf of the DPA committee and members we congratulate Graeme and thank him for his fantastic leadership.





The Junior Ranger Page!

Snakes and cakes

To celebrate another fantastic year of Junior Ranger involvement in caring for the park we threw them an end of year party following our last Park Care Day in November. Around 40 Junior Rangers enjoyed a visit from Matt from Animal Attraction and his reptile friends. While the kids jostled for a front row seat the adults noticeably retreated to the back of the room! Matt was a fantastic educator showing and explaining a number of different lizards and pythons. The kids were fascinated by these beautiful creatures and eagerly took turns to pat and hold them. The kids learnt a lot about reptiles including what to do if they encounter them in the wild (slowly back away 10 metres and then alert an adult).

This was followed by a party afternoon tea, with cookies, popcorn, lollies and more. There weren't any leftovers!

– **Karina Rook and Carina Watson**



Carp just too clever

Thank you to all the children and parents who attended Catch-a-Carp Day last November. We had a wonderful turn out (around 50 people!). Unfortunately no luck catching any carp, although one young angler bagged an eel, which was later



Photo: Anthony Jones

released. The Water Watch trailer was on site to educate the children about the European carp and the damage they do to waterways. Thanks again to Water Watch officer Julia Vanderoord for her fantastic support of the event.

Thanks also to our sponsors, Oz Camping and Disposals (664 High Street Thornbury) and Game Hunter (www.gamehunter.com.au) who generously donated prizes for the day. Better luck next year to all our junior fishing enthusiasts.

– **Karina Rook**

What a prize!

As this edition of *DPA News* went out, a group of lucky Junior Rangers were packing their tents to join the Junior Ranger Camp Out. This fabulous prize is drawn at the last Park Care Day of the year, and is open to all financial Junior Rangers who attend at least one Park Care Day. Make sure you get a chance to enter this year – return the membership form on page six of this newsletter.





Remember this!

DPA subscriptions for 2007 are now due. Here are the answers to all your membership questions.

How long is my membership valid for?

DPA memberships are valid for one calendar year. If you haven't yet signed up for 2007 your membership has lapsed.

What do I get for my money?

Apart from the satisfaction of contributing to your community, you get four newsletters a year and free entry to DPA events, including the Picnic Races, bonfire night and Catch-a-Carp Day.

How do I get a form and how do I pay?

There's a form on the last page of this newsletter. Forms are also available from the rangers' office and at our website at www.dpa.org.au. You can sign up when you come to DPA events, leave your payment at the rangers' office or post it to the address on the form.

What is the Junior Ranger Club?

Junior Rangers is the DPA's kids' club, for children aged under 16 (older kids are encouraged to join as student members). Junior Rangers help out at Park Care Days and also participate in events including Catch-a-Carp Day, junior wildlife spotlighting and junior bonfire night.

How do I get a Junior Ranger card?

Financial Junior Ranges can pick up their cards at any DPA event. Each time you attend an event in the park your card is stamped. At each Park Care Day and at the end of the year, the cards are used to enter the prize draw.

What is an "active member"?

Active members are people who help us by participating in Park Care Days. In return, we give you a 50 per cent discount on your membership. Families, households and individuals can sign up as active members.

How can I get more information?

Speak to a committee member at any DPA event, email info@dpa.org.au or phone Graeme on 9499 3849.

What's on in Darebin Parklands

Clean Up Australia Day is on Sunday 4 March and once again we'll be ridding the park of junk and litter. Meet at rangers' office at 9 am. The clean up will continue until noon. Please bring gumboots as we will be walking in the water to collect litter from the creek banks. For information, phone Karina on 9499 4338 or email karina_rook@hotmail.com.

Movie night returns to Darebin Parklands on Saturday 17 February, with a screening of the G-rated movie Valiant. The night starts at 6.30, with a guided Spiritual Healing Trail walk at 7 pm and didgeridoo playing, indigenous dancing and live music from 8 pm before the movie starts at sunset. The movie will screen in the amphitheatre near the main duck pond (enter from Separation Street, Alphington, and walk down the main path.) Bring a picnic dinner or enjoy the sausage sizzle and other food for sale. This free event is supported by the Darebin Council. The DPA needs volunteers to help run our information table. If you can spare half an hour on the night, please email us at info@dpa.org.au.

The Darebin Parklands Picnic Races is on again on Sunday 18 March. As well as plenty of contestants to get into all the fun of the egg throw, boot toss, sack races and King and Queen of the Mountain events, we need volunteers to help us organise the event. If you can spend an hour on the day helping on the membership desk or acting as a games marshal, please drop us a line at info@dpa.org.au.

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Post PO Box 3, Ivanhoe, 3079
Email info@dpa.org.au
Phone Graeme, 9499 3849
Web www.dpa.org.au





2007 membership application

First name.....

Last name.....

Junior Ranger names.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Phone.....

I would like to receive *DPA News* and updates by email. My email address is (*Help us to stay in touch – please write clearly*)

Membership type (<i>please tick one box</i>)	Cost	Number	Total
Individual One person	\$15		
Active Membership Yes! I/we will come to DPA Park Care Days in 2007. Please give me an Active Member discount.	\$10		
Junior Ranger For all kids who want to have fun and contribute to the park. (<i>Please collect your Junior Ranger card at any DPA event</i>).	\$2		
Couple/family/household Two adults and any number of Junior Rangers, from the same household or family. (<i>Please collect your Junior Ranger card at any DPA event</i>).	\$20		
Concession Unwaged, seniors and students	\$10		
Corporate	\$50		
Donations It's not tax deductible but it will make you feel good! <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Please tick this box if you would like to us to acknowledge your donation in DPA News</i>			
<i>Please make cheques payable to Darebin Parklands Association Inc. Return this form and payment to the Treasurer, Darebin Parklands Association, PO Box 3, Ivanhoe 3079.</i>			

My interests are...

- Urban parklands
- Plants
- Animals
- Geology
- Birds

I can help in...

- Planting/horticulture
- Event organising
- Development projects
- Grants/fundraising
- Other...

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