



Get together, have fun

Welcome back to another exciting year with the Darebin Parklands Association. This year we have scheduled an even bigger calendar of events in the park, kicking off with the first ever **Darebin Parklands Picnic Races** on Sunday, March 6 (details page 3). This is going to be an action packed day of old fashioned fun and games for young and young at heart. Bonfire night and all of our popular Junior Ranger activities are also on the calendar again this year.

The DPA's annual general meeting is on at 8 pm, Tuesday, February 22, in the rangers' office. Come along and hear more about the Picnic Races and other DPA activities.

The AGM is also the time when all members can put their names forward to join the DPA committee.

Any financial member can nominate. There's no paperwork – just put your hand up on the night. Serving on the committee is a rewarding way to help out around the park. If you've enjoyed DPA Park Care Days and events in the past and want to get more involved in our projects, please consider joining the committee. The only qualifications needed are an interest in the park and a willingness to contribute your ideas.

All organisations thrive on a mixture of experience and fresh enthusiasm, and

that's why we are especially keen to add to the new faces who have joined the committee in recent years. If you would like to know more, please call me on 9499 3849.

I would like to thank graphic designer Russell Anderson, who assisted with the redesign of the DPA newsletter, and graphic artist Kathy Howloko, who is responsible for our fantastic new logo (details page 4).

It's great to see that so many members have already renewed their subscriptions for 2005, and a special thanks to all of those who also made donations to the DPA. If you haven't yet done so, please take a minute to return the membership form accompanying this newsletter. We look forward to your continued support during what promises to be another exciting year for the DPA.

– **Grame Martin, president**

DPA events 2005

February 22 AGM, 8 pm, rangers' office

March 6 Darebin Parklands Picnic Races

May 15 Park Care Day 1 pm–3 pm

May 31 DPA quarterly meeting

June 19 Park Care Day 1 pm–3 pm

August 30 DPA quarterly meeting

Sept 11 Park Care Day 1 pm–3 pm

November 29 DPA quarterly meeting





Pete's off, Rhys reigns

Hello members,

Well this is my last newsletter for a while as I'm off on long service leave and passing the reins of the Darebin Parklands onto Rhys.

Melbourne Water has completed the planned works along Donaldson Creek and also built the basalt rock retaining wall at the pool section of the creek. I'm discussing with Melbourne Water constructing a fence around the pool site so we can establish some native plants there, as well as providing public access and perhaps some seating. We will also talk about the willows downstream that need to be removed and fixing the dog-walking track down from the footbridge.

Recently we had a small bushfire in the park when some vandals set alight the slope on the Darebin side, near the Hurstbridge rail line. A combination of rangers and the MFB had the fire under control within minutes.

The DPA Junior Ranger camp out was held on the January 29 and 30. We set up camp on the Ivanhoe floodplain, started a campfire and built a small tent city. It was a great night and one that we should try to hold annually.

The Spiritual Healing Trail has been a huge success with mountains of praise coming to us from all over Victoria. We have received calls from people in as far as Horsham, Ballarat, Omeo, Mildura, just to name a few, who have travelled all that way to walk the trail. The trail has enabled people to walk the park with a purpose and discover the charm we all know so well.

Finally we have received had several

complaints about people walking dogs off lead on the Ivanhoe side, especially around the wetland. The rangers do try to enforce these rules but some people believe that they have rights to do as they please. Over the next six months we will investigate what more can be done to enforce these local laws.

Please call Rhys Collins on 0400 646 728 if you need to report something or need assistance about the park.

Seeya in June,

**– Peter J. Wiltshire
Ranger in charge**

Nursery is a real grower

About 15 DPA members and friends are nurturing around 1000 seedlings for planting into the parklands and along the creek this winter, as part of the DPA plant nursery project. Some of the species were very quick to germinate, like *Dodonea viscosa*, the Wedge-leaf Hop Bush, which are now about 25 centimetres tall. Some boxes of seeds sadly didn't germinate – probably because the seed wasn't viable. The *Lomandra longifolia*, or Spiny Mat Rush, only started sprouting about a week ago.

We will be planting out most of the seedlings at Park Care Days over the winter months, and next spring, we will probably start growing again, hopefully mostly with seed collected in the parklands.

Give me a call on 9497 1332 if you are interested in seed collecting or planting or if you want to know more about our nursery.

– Eve Recht





Happy campers

Damper and toasted marshmallows over the camp fire, fording the creek in the back of the ute and late-night wildlife spotlighting were the highlights of the recent Junior Ranger camp out, attended by the winners of last year's end of year prize draw – Lily R, Alice B, Joshua B, Issy S and Lani J.



Much to the surprise of passing dog walkers, we transformed the usually tranquil creek flats near the bottom billabong into a mini-town, with tents, a campfire and a portable barbecue.

The event was heaps of fun, and the DPA would like to thank head ranger Peter Wiltshire and his assistant Rhys Collins for helping to run the event.

Paid-up Junior Rangers are eligible to win great prizes, including attending the camp out. Simply pay your 2005 membership fee, collect your card at any DPA event, then use your card to enter our prize draws.

This year we have another great roster of kids' events that are free for Junior Rangers, including spotlighting, bonfire night and Catch-a-Carp Day. To find out more about Junior Rangers, call Graeme on 9499 3849 or email darebinparklandsassociation@yahoo.com

Fun and games in the park

The first ever Darebin Parklands Picnic Races will be held on Sunday, March 6, from 12 noon to 4 pm, on the grass area south of the Separation Street entrance. This is going to be an action-packed day of old-fashioned fun and games for the young, and the young at heart.

Bring along a picnic and enjoy lunch in the park, then burn off some energy at the sack races, boot toss and egg throw. Iron men, women and kids can then pit themselves against the mighty Mount Puffalo and vie for the title of junior and adult King and Queen of the Mountain.

Entry in the races is free for DPA members and \$2 donation for others. All members re-signing on the day receive a limited edition DPA cap, and great prizes are also on offer.

Watch your email and the park noticeboards for a detailed schedule, and in the meantime, mark Sunday, March 6 on your calendar.

Can you spare an hour on the day to assist the DPA with running this event? Duties include helping out with organising the games and staffing the membership and inquiries desk. If you can assist, please call Graeme, or email us.

Annual general meeting

Hear all the details about the upcoming Darebin Parklands Picnic Races at our annual general meeting. Tuesday, February 22, 8 pm, in the rangers' office. All welcome. Supper provided.





Help you can bank on

The rehabilitation of Hidden Valley has received a major boost, courtesy of Westpac Bank's Operation Backyard program. Westpac is donating more than \$17,000, allowing us to complete a comprehensive rehabilitation plan for the site, which is upstream from the footbridge, on the park's Ivanhoe side.

David Mitchell, a landscape rehabilitation specialist and DPA member, prepared the plan, in close consultation with the park rangers.

Hidden Valley is an attractive site and has been much improved by the hard work of DPA members and rangers over many years. Now it can reach its full potential. As well as donating the cost of materials including plants, gravel for paths and mulch, Westpac will provide eight staff members for 17 days to prepare and plant, under the supervision of the park's rangers.

The project will remove weeds and re-establish vegetation that would have existed prior to European settlement. The new plants will help stabilise the steep escarpments, create habitat for native fauna and improve access.

DPA members are invited to meet the Westpac team at a welcome barbecue at 7 pm on Thursday, March 10, at the rangers' office.

We also need DPA volunteers to help with the project, by coming along during the 17 days (weekdays and weekends), between March and August, when the Westpac crew will be working. If you are interested and available during the week to work on this inspiring project, please contact me on 9499 3849.

– Graeme Martin

Our new logo

In this edition of the DPA newsletter we unveil our new logo, created by graphic artist and designer Kathy Howloko. Kathy is a long-time DPA supporter, and also donated her time to design our *Home Cats Safe Cats Safe Wildlife* leaflet in 2003.

The logo celebrates the park's natural and man-made features, and the role the DPA has played over its 32-year history in preserving and nurturing them. You can see the distinctive curve of the creek as it meanders through the park, the footbridge that members designed and built in 1979 and the popular duck ponds.

Some members have asked about the concentric circles in the pond. Platypus aficionados would recognise these as "platypus ripples", the distinctive markers that these unique creatures make when they break the surface of the water. They are there to signify the DPA's long-term aim of creating platypus habitat in the park, which will help these wonderful animals to re-colonise our stretch of the creek.

The DPA is one of Australia's oldest community environment organisations, and our new logo is one of the ways the DPA committee is working to broaden the organisation's appeal and ensure it remains lively and relevant over the next 30 years and beyond.

We are extremely grateful to Kathy, who runs Kat's Miow Graphic Art and Design, for all her hard work on the logo, much of which was done on a voluntary basis.

– Ingrid Svendsen

