



### November info evening

Local landscape architect and DPA supporter Chris Dance will speak at our next **information evening**, at 8 pm, on **Tuesday, 29 November**, in the rangers' office. Chris will talk on landscape design in the park, and give us a rundown on the exciting plans for a new boardwalk and path through Hidden Valley. Hear all the latest news, then join us for supper. All welcome.

### 2005 – fun, games and growth

Another busy year is drawing to a close for the Darebin Parklands Association. And what a year it's been.

This year we expanded our program of community events, holding our first annual Darebin Parklands Picnic Races, where we lobbed gumboots and eggs and crowned our inaugural King and Queen of the Mountain.

With 300 members, the DPA is now one of Australia's biggest community environmental groups.

We made huge progress on one of the parklands' longest running projects, the restoration of Hidden Valley. Our partnership with Westpac Bank and LandCare, and the assistance of rangers and DPA members, has seen new pathways built and hundreds of trees, shrubs and grasses planted. We also developed our new website

[www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au), installed water pollution hotline signs and grew hundreds of plants in our nursery.

You can help us choose more inspiring new projects by completing the attached future directions survey.

As this is the last newsletter of the year I'd like to thank everyone who has helped us in 2005: the rangers; the DPA committee, and in particular Anthony Jones who has done a magnificent job building our website; and of course our members, whose donations of time and money make all of our achievements possible. For those who want to join in the fun again next year, a 2006 membership form accompanies this newsletter.

We hope to see you at our last Park Care Day for the year, on 27 November, and at our information evening, on 29 November.

From everyone in the DPA, best wishes the festive season.

– **Graeme Martin, president**

### DPA events 2005/2006

**Nov 27** Park Care Day 1 pm–3 pm

**Nov 29** DPA information evening

**Feb 28 2006** Annual General Meeting

**May 14** Park Care Day 1 pm–3 pm

**June 18** Park Care Day 1 pm–3 pm

**Sept 10** Park Care Day 1 pm–3 pm

**Nov 26** Park Care Day 1 pm–3 pm





## Top marks to local students

Hello members,

We are having a busy time at present with many schools booking in due to the improving weather.

Ivanhoe Primary School received a grant for \$2000 to revegetate a local park and they selected Darebin Parklands. Preps, grade ones and twos are working along the creek below McDonald Avenue on the Northcote floodplain. The children have planted riparian trees, shrubs and grasses.

It's a great project although a little late in the year to plant, but as it's along the creek we should be able to maintain them easily enough. The kids are taking ownership of their plants. They have written their names on each plant and had return visits to water them.

The bonfire night of 14 October went well and once again we were blessed with a perfect night for it. Our "Survivor theme" seemed to be popular although seeing children using our theme lights as Olympic torches was interesting; not to mention them trying to cook marshmallows on them. We live and learn.

The City of Darebin and Darebin Creek Management Committee are hosting movies in the park over summer with the first movie date set on Saturday 11 February.

We will have Cuban music beforehand and a family movie starting after dusk. With the DPA's help Rhys and I will be running a refreshment and food stall on the night. The movie is free to the public but it costs \$1000 to host. This time Darebin Council is footing the bill, but in future we will have to.

I apologise for length of the grass around the park – both councils are struggling to keep up the required slashing due to the high growth rates we're seeing this year. We will do our best to keep the grass down and the weeds under control in the coming weeks. Ironically the best days for weed control works are fine with no wind – also the most popular time for visitors. This means spraying must be done very early in the morning.

I would like to thank the DPA committee members who have been so helpful over the past few months, Graeme Martin, Ingrid Svendsen, Sue Course and Sue Kelly and also Barry Arnstein.

See you in the park,

– **Peter Wiltshire**

## Vale Wally Willmot

The DPA was saddened to learn of the death of long-standing DPA member Wally Willmot, who lived in Rockbeare Grove, Ivanhoe, for about 60 years.

Wally supported the DPA financially over many years and often came to meetings until he became too old. Over the last two or three years he rode around on a scooter with his little dog on the back. Every now and again his dog would jump off and go for a little walk while Wally stopped and waited for him to return.

When he died friends looked after the dog but he always disappeared and went back to the old place to look for Wally.

Wally will also be missed by the DPA and others in the local community.

– **Sue Course**





## Park funding an election issue

As we all know, the Darebin Parklands is a vital community resource for passive recreation, enjoyed by hundreds of local residents daily.

Rangers employed by the Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC), which is partly funded by Banyule Council, are responsible for the day to day management of the park.

The DPA is concerned that Banyule Council funding for the DCMC to support the operation of the Darebin Parklands has been declining in real value over the last few years.

As a result, the parkland division is running at a loss – \$21,000 last year. This shortfall is significantly impacting on the operations of the parklands.

To bring this serious issue to the attention of the council, the DPA invited candidates in the forthcoming council election to a tour of the parklands on Saturday 5 November. We were impressed by the turn-out of eight candidates, including five who are contesting Griffin Ward, which borders the park. The sitting and would-be councillors were shown around by ranger Peter Wiltshire and DPA representatives.

The candidates who came were: Jenny Mulholland, Dayananda Shetty, Peter Hammond, Spiros Papadopoulos and Michel Foster (Griffin Ward); Anthony Carbines, Gary Schorel-Hlavka (Olympia Ward); Ginny Verberne (Grimshaw Ward).

We have also invited candidates for Griffin Ward to make a public statement of their commitment to restore adequate funds to the DCMC to manage the park.

The DPA will not support any particular candidate but for the information of our members we have posted the statements received so far on our new, improved website at [www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au). We will also note those candidates who have not responded.

After the elections, we will retain the statement from the successful candidate on our website as a record of what we hope will be their commitment to help restore equitable funding to Darebin Parklands.

– **Graeme Martin**

## Seeds and weeds

Want to help grow plants for the park? Then come to the next Park Care Day on **Sunday 27 November** where we will be potting up boxes of seeds into tubes, ready for people to take them home (in polystyrene veggie boxes) to grow in their backyards for six months or so. We will be planting indigenous (local) trees, shrubs, and flowers, to be planted in the parklands and at various places further up the creek next winter.

It's great fun - you can pot up seeds for others to take home, or do a box for yourself to nurture, and then bring back the seedlings to plant out in the park.

And if this seems a bit fiddly, then come along and join a team of willing workers who will be clearing the edges of the bike path down towards the railway bridge in preparation for planting next year.

Meet at the rangers' office on Separation Street at 1 pm, then stay for afternoon tea at 3 pm.

For information, phone 9497 1332.

– **Eve Recht**





## Fish fickle – but eel be right

Despite lots of nibbles, fish eluded almost 60 young anglers at the DPA's **Catch-a-Carp Day** on 12 November.

An eel was the day's main catch and as protected wildlife, it was returned to the creek. There were plenty of winners though, with a free sausage sizzle, show bags and prizes for three lucky children. Junior Ranger Ruby D (pictured below



with DPA president Graeme Martin) won first prize – a great new fishing rod courtesy of our sponsor, Aussie Angler, in Greensborough.

The wildlife was less shy at the **Park After Dark spotlighting walk** on 28 October, when around 40 Junior Rangers encountered possums, eels, spiders and grey-headed flying foxes. Thanks to rangers Peter Wiltshire and Rhys Collins for their assistance with Junior Ranger activities.

And finally, don't forget that the **Junior Ranger end of year prize draw** will happen after the 27 November Park Care Day. Use your card to enter and you could win one of six tickets to the **Junior Ranger Camp Out** on December 10. Financial Junior Rangers who have at least one stamp on their card showing they have attended a DPA event in 2005 can enter. Good luck!

## Snakes: be alert, not alarmed

Tiger snakes live along most local waterways, including the Darebin Creek. They are pale grey to brown with bands on top that can be olive green or reddish brown to black.

While tiger snakes are venomous there is no need for panic. No-one in recent memory has been bitten in the parklands, because snakes are generally shy unless provoked.

Snakes are protected wildlife, so it's illegal to kill or relocate them without a permit. If you see a snake, keep your eye on it while calmly moving away.

Also remember to:

- Be alert for basking snakes, even on warm winter days;
- Wear solid shoes and protective clothing when snakes may be about;
- Never reach into hollow logs or long grass without checking first;
- Check the other side before stepping over logs or rocks;
- Stop your dog from running through long grass where snakes could live.

If you live near the park, you can minimise the chances of a snake visit by keeping grass short, clearing away rubbish and other potential hiding places and controlling food sources, such as rats and mice.

More tips are in the *Snakes and the Urban Environment* leaflet, free from the rangers' office.

**DPA News is published quarterly by the Darebin Parklands Association Inc**

**Incorporated Association A0031183G**

**Post:** PO Box 3, Ivanhoe, 3079

**Email** [info@dpa.org](mailto:info@dpa.org)

**Phone** Graeme, 9499 3849

**Web** [www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au)

