



Annual General Meeting 2014

Meeting Date	Tuesday 27 May 2014 at 7.30pm
Location	Environment Centre, Darebin Parklands, Alphington
Attendees	Mark Creamer, Peter Revill, Diane Dawson, Ian McMaster, Louise Keene, Charmaine Connan, Barry Arnstein, John Dunlop, Claire Dunlop, Peter Wiltshire, Sue Course, Jan Borrowski, Peter Williams, Debra Nette, Annabelle Dureau, James Garriock, Maree Trenton, Samantha Roberts, Janet White, Aaltje Harvey, Peter Harvey, Ingrid Svendsen, Megan Goodwin, Susie Rodgers. Non members in attendance: Cr Craig Langdon, Catherine Marston, Paul Prentice
Apologies	Meredith Schnaap, Michael Mann

1. Welcome and acknowledgement of the traditional owners

Mark welcomed Cr Craig Langdon, Banyule Mayor and head of the DCMC, the Chief Ranger, Peter Wiltshire, and all members and guests. He also acknowledged the traditional owners of the land on which the parklands is situated.

2. Minutes from the Annual General Meeting of 28 May 2013

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed: Deb Nette. Seconded: Ian McMaster.

3. Business arising (Nil)

4. President's report

Mark provided a brief overview, noting that a detailed discussion of what the DPA has achieved in the last year occurs later in the meeting. He noted that it had been a productive year, with considerable progress against our strategic goals, as well as in other key areas. He drew the meeting's attention to the DPA Activities Plan which documents our activities and achievements against our strategic plan in an ongoing way. He foreshadowed the need to think about the next DPA strategic plan for 2015-2017 which will be discussed later in the meeting.

Mark noted that we have strived to maintain the key focus on our primary purpose – *“to protect and improve the bushland character of the parklands, maintaining it as a wildlife haven and a place to appreciate nature”*. To that end we have had several successful park care days and Mark thanked all those volunteers who turn out for those days as well as the Thursday morning group. He noted the success of our nesting box program and thanked Leader Newspapers for the grant supporting that work. He noted the great progress made on archiving our historical records, preserving the history of the parklands, as well as our ongoing information nights, website updates, and newsletters to members. Mark thanked Ingrid and David for their work on the feasibility study for the Environment Centre, noting that Ingrid would provide an update later in the meeting. He also thanked the councils of Darebin, Banyule, and Whittlesea, as well as the Hamer Foundation, for their financial contributions to the feasibility study.

Mark thanked Peter Wiltshire and the rest of the team, as well as the DCMC and their committee. Finally, Mark thanked the Committee for their hard work and ongoing commitment to the parklands, with special mention to our three retiring members: Ingrid Svendsen, David Craven and Peter Revill.

5. Treasurer's report

Meredith Schaap, the DPA treasurer, sent her apologies for this meeting, but she provided a report which was presented by Mark. Noting that the DPA financial year ends on 31 December, the report noted that 2013 was a normal year with no large payments apart from the last installment for the archivist. Membership and donations were slightly less than in 2012, but expenditure was also less. Grants were received for the Environment Centre feasibility study, as well as for the nestbox program.

At the end of 2013 there was \$6,108.38 in the Statement Account. There are two term deposit accounts with \$6,179 and \$5,000 respectively. Total assets at the end of 2013 were \$17,376.25, but \$9,000 of this had been earmarked for the feasibility study. With no large payments due, we should start making a small profit next financial year.

The treasurer thanked Anthony Jones for auditing the books this year and noted that he has kindly agreed to remain as the DPA auditor for the coming year.

6. Membership secretary report (Peter Williams)

76 paid up members: 61 as families, 10 individual, 5 concession, 4 junior rangers and 15 life members.

7. Life memberships

Motion: That in recognition of her enormous contributions to the Darebin Parklands Association, Ingrid Svendsen be made a life member of the organisation.
Proposed: Mark Creamer. **Seconded:** Peter Harvey. Carried unanimously.

Mark thanked Ingrid for her outstanding contributions and presented her with a donation from DPA to the East Timor Hearts Foundation.

8. Election of office bearers

Mark noted the resignations of Ingrid Svendsen, Peter Revill and David Craven. He thanked David (in abstentia) and Peter for their contributions to the DPA. Mark then handed the chair to Cr. Craig Langdon for the election of new office bearers. Craig then read the nominations received to date; no further nominations were received at that point. The following list of nominations was put to the meeting as a single block.

President	Mark Creamer
Vice-President	Vacant
Treasurer	Meredith Schaap
Secretary	Samantha Roberts
Membership Secretary	Peter Williams
General committee members	Debra Nette, Ian McMaster, Louise Keene, Charmaine Connan, Michael Mann, Susie Rogers and James Garriock

Proposed: Annabelle Dureau. **Seconded** Barry Arnstein. Carried unanimously.

Mark resumed the Chair.

9. Appointment of auditor

Motion: that Anthony Jones be reappointed as auditor.

Proposed: Mark Creamer. Seconded: Peter Revill. Carried unanimously.

10. Ranger's report – current and future issues for the parklands

Peter Wiltshire provided an overview of park issues, including:

- Shared bike trail will be completed soon and may create issues because of cyclists' speed on the downhill sections; this is possibly aggravated by riders logging fast times on cycling apps - Deb to look into flagging the steep hill as a dangerous site.
- \$90K grant has been received for filtration improvements and may be used to extend the ponds.
- Key projects include Hidden Valley (\$18k over 10 years) and Mt Puffalo: 4000 kangaroo grass seedlings, as well as wildflowers, and trees will be removed. Next will be looking at the eastern end of Snake Grass, an area that is currently fenced off (following a direct seeding project 10 years ago). The Thursday crew are currently hand weeding and planting 1000 *Poa labillardieri* (perennial tussock grass) seedlings. They also managed Snake Grass during the winter weeding season. Cleaning up Hidden Valley after last year's flood is also a priority. The flood was a 1 in 5 event, not 1 in 100! A decision has been made to move away from flood zones so that projects will have a lasting effect.
- The junior ranger bonfire night will be held on Friday 10 October. Peter suggests opening up this event to the broader community and making it a joint DPA/DCMC event. The junior ranger camp out will be held in November. Spot lighting will be held later in the year.
- The sinkhole is still being investigated. A \$400k plus project for Darebin City Council. It's in the hands of geotechnicians. The EPA want to take the contaminated soil off site, at huge expense, but the only contaminant is bitumen.
- The Australian cyclecross championships are being held on Sunday 22 June.
- Peter noted that the DCMC has an artist in residence, Katie Roberts. Sunday 1 June is Drawing on the Darebin day. See <http://darebinart.blogspot.com.au/>.

11. DPA Action/activity plan updates

Theme 1: Revegetation and related work in the parklands (DN/IM/MM)

Revegetation of the parklands aims to create nature reserves for native flora and fauna. In the last year the following projects have been undertaken under the guidance of Peter Wiltshire our ranger. Some future plans are also mentioned:

- Planting of Mount Puffalo. Thousands of grasses have been planted in the past year. In 2014 the project will be completed and include the planting of native wildflowers.
- Weeding of the Snake Grass area was completed in November 2013. This was done to prevent the grasses and wildflowers being overrun.
- Draining of the wetlands and removing the club rush to restore wetlands to their original state (to be completed in 2014).
- Regular maintenance (mostly weeding) by the Thursday crew and students from TAFE to encourage self seeding of native plants.
- Mass planting of *Poa labillardieri* downstream from Clifton bridge to help stabilize the banks.
- Additional planting around the area where the time capsule is located.
- Additional revegetation is planned for 2014 in the north east of the parklands near the creek.

Annabel Dureau spoke for Michael Mann re wildlife issues.

Nest box program

- Started approx 15 months ago; now over 100 placed across the parklands.
- Supported by a Leader grant - “penthouses for parrots in the parklands”.
- With generous assistance from our Senior Park Ranger, the nest boxes were monitored regularly during the breeding season. Gathered interesting results with rainbow lorikeets, ducks and possums nesting, and not to mention the stars of the show: one kookaburra nest. Some of you may have seen a little video called “Mr Kookaburra” featured on YouTube. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4R7-32Mz4U>.
- Anecdotal evidence from people who use the park, report seeing more rosellas. Towards the end of the season one pair nested, but although the rosellas reared two chicks, almost ready to leave the nest, when mynas took ownership of the nest, the adult rosellas were unable to look after their chicks and they were tossed out of the nest.
- In light of this event, Michael is now experimenting with different nesting box designs specifically for eastern rosellas, but anti Indian mynas. We're now looking forward to this breeding season.

Indian myna bird reduction program

Two strategies have been employed to tackle the Indian myna problem. One strategy has been to install nest boxes for Indian mynas. They are placed near the other nest boxes as decoys to deter them from invading the rosella nests. This strategy also means that the mynas' eggs can be removed and replaced with dummy eggs. The other strategy is trapping the mynas and this method has been highly effective with a total of 386 trapped to date.

Again there's anecdotal evidence that there are not as many Indian mynas observed around the park. This may be why the records show that the number of mynas caught for the last four months is declining slightly. Michael noted there has been a higher component of young mynas being caught. The program is ongoing.

Cr Langdon asked that the DPA write to him in his capacity as mayor of Banyule to see if Banyule Council can add to this program. He wants to follow up this in the City of Banyule as the mynas are a very big problem.

Theme 2: Celebrate the history, heritage and environment of the parklands and the DPA. Charmaine Connan and Louise Keene.

2.1. Investigate conserving historical remnants within the parklands eg the weirs and historically significant vegetation like Pine Ridge and installing interpretive signage.

We have compiled a list of historical remnants and historically significant vegetation. We are at the stage of determining our options for appropriate signage, either physical markers in the park or a walking tour app.

2.2. Apply for major awards for the parklands and DPA activities

For the 2012-2013 year, the DPA has applied for and been successful for several awards:

- A Leader Grants program for nesting boxes in July 2013.
- A community grant for plants for 2014 was submitted in September.
- We aim to apply for other awards in 2013-2014, with a view to collaborating with the DCMC and/or Friends of the Darebin Creek where appropriate.

2.3. Catalogue, conserve and make publicly accessible via the internet if possible the DPA's historic records

The cataloguing and conserving is virtually complete. New records are catalogued and conserved as needed. In 2013 the DPA established itself on Victorian Collections, an open catalogue of historical records from organisations around Victoria. So far we have published about 50 records, predominantly from Laurie Course's collection of photographs of Rockbeare Park in the 1970s. We are continuing work on this with the aim to have more photos from the collection up this year.

2.4. Form a committee to plan the celebration of the DPA's 40th birthday in 2013

This is complete. The 40th birthday celebration was a major success, including tree planting by Lady Hamer.

2.5. Re-introduce the DPA photographic competition as a financially sustainable event, possibly utilising social media

No action taken as yet.

2.6. Investigate audio walking tours of the parklands possibly incorporating oral histories

This ties in with 2.1 and the possibility of an app that park users could get for their smartphone of walking tours that highlight key historical landmarks and vegetation, including oral histories, and photographs from the archive. We are currently investigating developing an app including the cost and if there are grants available to fund it.

Theme 3: The parklands as a centre for environmental education (MC/IS)

- The cycle path is making good progress.
- Regular information nights were held throughout the year.
- A weather station is proposed and may be built into the environment centre.
- Ingrid is coordinating the feasibility study for the Environment Centre, which was a recommendation in the 2008 master plan. It is proposed to be a facility for the entire catchment. 5000 kids a year come to the parklands. Also a community resource. Support and funding has been received from each council along the creek: \$15k in total for a feasibility study. A high calibre submission from Deutscher and Sally Hirst has been received. They were appointed two weeks ago and will report back in two to three months (July/August). It is an extensive consultation stage. Sally will come and speak to the DPA, maybe at the August info night.

Theme 4: Community involvement in the parklands (PW/PR)

- Revegetation, weeding, nest boxes and the website all attract community involvement.
- A peace tree was planted in memory of Aboriginal community leader Reg Blow.
- The Spiritual Healing trail is the only one of its kind in Australia and we have produced a brochure for it.
- Cr Langdon noted that up to \$50,000 is available for environmental community grants from the Banyule Environmental Advisory Group.

Theme 5: Philanthropic support, sponsorship, etc. (SR/MS)

We're trying to get DGR tax free status. Will dovetail into DCMCs efforts (Grahame Martin). The DCMC has established a public fund. A committee of 6 will be formed to manage this fund.

12. 2015-17 Action plan

The committee has appointed a subcommittee to develop a new plan: Ian McMaster, Peter Williams and James Garriock. There will be extensive consultation during this process and the final plan will be presented at the general meeting in November.

13. General business

Motion: That the DPA membership category of junior ranger be removed from 2015.

Discussion: Almost all current junior rangers are members through a family membership. It is currently possible for children under the age of 16 to join for a fee of \$2 without the family membership. This situation creates substantial administrative difficulties and raises certain duty of care issues. The concept of “junior rangers” will remain and specific junior ranger activities will continue on a regular basis. Children without DPA family memberships who wish to attend a junior ranger activity will be asked to pay a small fee for that activity on the day.

Proposed: Mark Creamer. Seconded: Peter Williams. Carried unanimously.

Motion: That the DPA membership fees be increased by \$5 per annum in each category for 2015 memberships, making the new annual fees: family (\$25), individual (\$20), and concession (\$15), while corporate membership be increased by \$25 (bringing it to \$75).

Discussion: The membership fees have not been increased for well over a decade and therefore, have fallen well behind CPI and other cost increases. This is a very small increase which we believe will neither be a financial burden to members, nor be a disincentive to potential members. The additional funds will be used to support DPA projects.

Proposed: Mark Creamer. Seconded: Sue Course. Carried unanimously.

14. Next Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 26 May 2015.

The meeting closed at 9.14pm.