

June 2020

President's Report



Wow, what a strange few months it has been – and we hope you are safe and well.

If you've been visiting the park, you will know that we've had an unprecedented level of visitors. It's terrific to see so many people discovering the park for the first time, though we want to recognise the strain on the Rangers as well as more regular visitors.

How do we encourage them to cherish and care for the Darebin Parklands in the same way we do?

How do we ensure that new visitors are aware of the story of the park, and the valued role they play?

These questions have been top of mind for me over the last few months – I would be interested to hear your suggestions.



Community members have played a crucial role in the restoration of the Darebin Parklands from tip to wildlife haven – how can we encourage this connection with the park?

There are a few changes for the DPA too...

Our Park Care Days are unlikely to go ahead for 2020 – though we are delighted that Darebin Council has redeployed staff to undertake some of the planting. This activity is via 'Rewilding Darebin', a key direction in Darebin's open space strategy, which aims to increase tree canopy and biodiversity – go to Darebin's Facebook page for some personal stories.

Our hard-working Thursday Crew had a delayed start to the year, but are now meeting up on Thursday mornings. If you're free or working from home and can spare a couple of hours, it is a wonderfully grounding way to start your day.

We had planned to bring you an update on the development of the Darebin Park Management Plan at the end of March, with opportunities to discuss some of the headline projects.

Restrictions meant that we couldn't proceed with our meeting – but, as it turns out, the overall timeframe has been extended, as Graeme reports later in this newsletter. Stay tuned for more, as we determine the next steps for this important work.

Lastly, we made a jigsaw puzzle!

Long-time Committee member Peter Williams initiated creation of a puzzle, using the beautiful watercolour map painted by Carly Altree-Williams for the DCMC [See P5] – a perfect way to while away an afternoon, plus discover hidden pockets to visit. Our first run has sold out, but we anticipate we'll do a second run very soon.

Lastly, as I write, we are learning about the passing of a woman in the park. It is tragic news and our sympathies are with her friends and family and the person who found her.

**Yours in health,
Sofie**

THE OLIVE FESTIVALS 2001-2



The first Olive festival in 2001 on the 20th May was devised as a celebration of the parklands with a focus on the olive trees. Some were more than 100 years old

Originally organised as a small family gathering it became something much bigger. Banuyle and Darebin Council's donated money to the cause and widespread publicity ensured a huge turnout of 4000 people

The day was a massive success and planning began on the next festival. The logistics of coordinating so many people lead to doubts about the feasibility of the festival. It certainly caused Peter Wiltshire headaches trying to coordinate parking etc



Visitors harvested the olives in the old way beating the trees then collecting the olives in nets

However, it did go ahead in 2001 with over 3000 participants attending.



Schools and community organisations prepared a variety of Mediterranean food. There was Greek dancing and Italian music and visitors.

The organisation of a festival for 4000 people is a big thing and it fell on the shoulders of a relatively few volunteers in the DPA. Running costs were considerable, grants were difficult to obtain and potential financial loss was a worry.

A huge increase in the cost of public liability added to the problems.

2002 turned out to be the last festival.

The festivals were remarkable example of how the DPA encourages community participation in the park.

Events in 2020

While restrictions seem to be easing, we have decided to reschedule or postpone most events planned for the first half of this year.

We have changed our 2020 AGM to coincide with our regular meeting on Tuesday 25 August - please look out for more details closer to the date.

Our Park Care days are unlikely to go ahead, but we will identify some other types of activities later in the year.

Happily, the Thursday Crew has begun working in the park again – with planting in Zeroland and hand weeding in Napier Wallace in recent weeks.

As we review our plans for 2020, we'll update our website – check here for more info:
<https://www.dpa.org.au/events-calendar/>

Pete's page

News from the ranger in charge

Hello DPA Members.

My report will be in a word, different this time around. As most of you know I took two months off from 10 March and have just started back at the park. Yes, you guessed it, I spent all my leave at home due to this dreaded pandemic.

I hope you are all healthy and that your jobs are okay as I feel very fortunate at present to be back at the park. The park is the busiest I have seen it on a daily basis with families using it to get outside and break the monotony of being stuck at home.

I was planning to do some citizen science while I was away on epicormic growth on true gums in bushfire ravaged areas but due to the pandemic I was not allowed into those sites which was disappointing but totally understandable.

Thank you for your kind words and emails regarding my appearance on Gardening Australia last month. It was nice to see the parklands on TV and it looked great. On the day of filming all the parklands animals behaved perfectly for the camera, being in the right spots at the right time so I thank them too.

I have been contacted by people and organizations all over Australia about the segment and our nest box and Myna control program here at the Parklands so it has been a very positive experience for DCMC.

Kate did a great job managing the parklands while I was away and I thank her for allowing me to have some leave. Whilst I was away DCMC employed a casual three days a week to assist Kate. Her name is Janette and she has been invaluable in particular maintaining the shared trail sections we manage down to Kew.

The status of future parkcare days is unknown at this point in time as Covid-19 spread is still a clear threat, but for now we will follow the advice of the State Government. Kate, Janette and I planted out the grasses intended for the first parkcare day site in Zeroland. Our parkcare day plant orders are still coming of course so we will do a lot of the planting this year ourselves unless we can organize a parkcare day in the future.

n saying that we intent to start up the Thursday Crew (limited to 10 members) on the 28th of May after the State Government this week relaxed the isolation rules for small groups, so that will help us a heap.

Critter of the Month



Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus*

These little birds' nest in burrows in the cliffs, creek banks and olive slope in the Darebin Parklands. The easiest place to see them is above the duck pond or along the slope below Rockbeare grove near our old nursery shed, (below 28 to 40 Rockbeare). Be warned they move fast and are something hard to see. Their double high pitch 'chirp' call would no doubt be very familiar to all park users.

They feed insects and on sugary deposits such as lerps by psyllids in the canopy of our Eucalyptus trees around the parklands.

See if you can find them.

See you in the park. Pete



Darebin Parklands Management Plan

COVID-19 restrictions have affected many things including development of the Darebin Parklands Management Plan. This does not mean that the work has stopped, but it does mean that proposed deadlines for consultation and delivery are pushed back a little and need to be re-scheduled. Unfortunately, the COVID restrictions have also significantly delayed delivery to us of a key report on the state of the vegetation in the Parklands and recommendations for future re-vegetation and management.

Once that report is received and digested, which we expect will be in the next week or two, we will be able to bring a full set of recommendations together so they can be considered by DPA Members.

You will have plenty of time to consider, discuss and comment on the draft recommendations. You will have an opportunity to comment directly to DCMC as individuals, and collectively as DPA if that's what you decide to do. At the same time, key staff from Darebin and Banyule Councils will be following a similar process, but they will also consider how the recommendations fit with Council strategies, priorities and budgets.

The draft recommendations would then be reviewed in light of all comments and suggestions, and integrated into a draft report which will be released for you to consider. I hope you will take the opportunity to participate in this process. As a group and individually you are, and will continue to be, an essential ingredient in the success of the Parklands.

Graeme Hamilton

'HISTORY WALKS'

Check out Peter Williams's fascinating walks north and south of Heidelberg Rd focusing on Alphington <https://www.dpa.org.au/history/>

What a great chance to explore the neighborhood around the parklands. Peter has done detailed research and provided clear maps to help us discover our local history. Although not strictly a Parklands activity, the history of the Parklands is tied very closely linked to the history of Alphington & Ivanhoe. Check out the Tower Hotel. 1860???



VOLUNTEER WITH THE DPA IN 2020.

Our volunteers have started!! Join them. We follow guidelines for managing Covid-19 announced by the State Government on Monday 11th May. This includes social distancing [not a problem in the park] A weekly group works under the guidance of Ranger Kate who teaches weed and plant identification. Work usually lasts 2-3 hours on Thursday morning from 9-11am.

Ranger Kate is not only an excellent Ranger with extensive bushland management knowledge but she also provides a delicious morning tea for the volunteers

The emphasis is on projects that stabilize the creek banks and planting that focuses on revegetation of areas like Snake Grass and Zero Land. Volunteers also participate in seed collection and propagation.

We are looking forward to another productive year in 2020. If interested in volunteering please contact:

Ranger Kate: kate@dcmc.org.au



Unfortunately, the fantastic activities planned by Maree Trentin this year have been postponed because of Covid-19. These included 'Catch a Carp', 'Dream Puppets' and Spotlighting with Ranger Pete.

Keep an eye out on our website and facebook page for updates in 2020

<https://www.dpa.org.au/>

Up and down the creek

News from the DCMC Coordination Division

2020 Projects

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed limitations on much but not all of our project delivery. While we have not been able to deliver community events during this time, it has provided us with valuable time for planning, project development and systems improvements.

Our two Community Environment Projects have had to be placed on hold as they are focussed on community engagement and training. We are continuing to do the background research into the biology of platypus and their habitat and dietary requirements however, to inform these projects once we can start again.

The Nestboxes for Wildlife Project, funded by City of Darebin is progressing despite having to cancel two community nestbox construction events due to Covid-19. We are currently setting up our nestbox monitoring data program Konekt to more accurately log GPS-linked data. We will recommence nestbox monitoring and maintenance in the near future.

The Escarpments and Meanders Project, funded by Melbourne Water is continuing as planned with site preparation underway for a winter planting.

Creek Coordination representative meetings.

DCMC held two inaugural coordination meetings. The Southern Catchment meeting included Darebin, Banyule and Melbourne Water and the north, Whittlesea, Darebin and Melbourne Water. The purpose of these meetings is to improve communications and data sharing leading to better collaboration and outcomes for creek management. It is likely that the structure and nature of these meetings will evolve but it was very well received with all parties recognising our collaborative potential

Updated website

Digital Evolution has recently gone live with the updated DCMC website. Initial feedback has been positive, but some changes are still being made and it is a work in progress. DCMC staff are being trained to update events and make other changes as needed to ensure the site stays current with Peter Grenfell taking on a leading role.

Darebin Creek Education Program

Peter Grenfell is investigating new approaches for delivery of the Education Program while schools have been closed. He will be using teacher feedback and researching online opportunities to inform new activity development.

Friends of Darebin Creek

The Friends are busy working on WeedWatch, a citizen science project. They have received \$7,500 funding from the Communities Environment Program via the Cooper electorate. The project will involve training of volunteers in weed identification and the use of the inaturalist app to log weed outbreaks along the creek. This information can then be passed onto the relevant land managers. Friends President Margaret De Kam is working with Therese Grinter and a designer to produce a new brochure and logo.

<http://friendsofdarebincreek.org.au/events-darebin-creek/>

Danny Reddan
Coordinator
Darebin Creek Management Committee

Darebin Parklands Jigsaw puzzle



Parklands jigsaw puzzle, based on the beautiful watercolour map painted by DCMC-commissioned artist Carly Altree-Williams was a great success. All copies are sold out. There maybe another run in the future

Thanks to Peter Williams for initiating the project. 500 pieces or a mind boggling 1000. Enjoy?????