

The rains have come, and a filmy veil of greenness thickens in the Parklands, which means planting days are almost upon us. This is my last message as President and there is a lot to cover.

Thanks to your efforts in saving power over summer, Jemena is coming to present us with a cheque at our planting day on Sunday May 27th at 1pm. There will be an official photographer so I'll be wearing my most authentic (dirty) planting gear. Please come along.

Then at 7:30pm on Tuesday May 29th we have our AGM. Please bring a plate or a bottle for we have much to celebrate. Pete is back from leave and will fill us in on various goings on. As usual we will keep the formal part of the meeting disappointingly short.

We have also received the final report on dog owner behaviour. The report and a PowerPoint of findings are linked from the email, they make fascinating reading.

In this newsletter you'll also find updates on our display at the library, on Junior Ranger archery, progress on the shared Yarana trail and more. Probably the thing that will stay with me longest is the massive crowd at the opening of the DYL, probably the happiest community gathering I've ever been to. See P4

Finally, please indulge me as I acknowledge and thank the Committee members of the DPA and the staff of the DCMC for their commitment to the cause. Finally, I also feel very grateful to the members of the DPA for putting faith in me as a custodian of the legacy you have created.

**James Garriock. President.**

## Editors Note

James has made a significant contribution to the DPA and the Darebin Parklands. He has spent hours of his own time to promote all that is good about our association. His ability to negotiate and promote our interests with politicians and bureaucrats has achieved tangible results for our community. He undertook the role of President with energy, enthusiasm and good humour. Thanks James.

## Annual General Meeting

**29 May - 7.30-9.00pm Education Centre**

The AGM gives members an opportunity to participate in the future of the Darebin Parklands Association. Office bearers will be elected and Peter Wiltshire will give members an update of key issues in the park. Bring a snack or a drink to celebrate the past year and acknowledge committee members who are leaving. **The Education Centre is located at the end of Separation Street. Alphington**

## Events calendar 2018

27 May.....Park Care Day  
29 May.....Annual General Meeting  
24 June.....Park Care Day  
22 July.....Park Care Day  
26 August.....Park Care Day  
28 August.....General Meeting/Info Night  
21 September....Community Bonfire Night

# Pete's page

## News from the ranger in charge

Finally, the Darebin shared trail is complete and linked to the main Yarra trail. It's been open less than two months and our southern neighbors are discovering the Parklands with growing regularity. Katy and I have started our agreement with Vic Roads in looking after the new section from the parklands to the Yarra main trail and while I'm at it, a big thanks to James for his awesome job negotiating the agreement between DCMC and Vic Roads.

For me it will take some time to get use people entering the parklands so frequently from the southern end in such numbers. As I recall we didn't ever plan to do work along the slope as it is seriously degraded and unstable. We've had two sink holes and a major land slip on that site over the past 15 years so it's time for us to plan its renovation and revegetate it.

Speaking of trails, the Parklands trail extension to Wingrove Street is due to have some further clean-up works carried out in the next few weeks and the Yarana Road chain mesh fence removed and replaced with a new chain mesh fence on the other side of the trail. The sound barrier fence is no longer going to be installed. DCMC will start planting the sides with grass and shrubs up after all the works are complete.

More news on the trails is that the old 2.4m sections from the junction section near the toilets down to the duck pond and in front of the DCMC buildings around the corner heading south are going to be replaced with a 3-meter-wide path upgrade before the end of June. We have been told that the rest of the trail in the parklands is also planned to be upgraded over the next year or so. Making the trail 3m wide vs 2.4m is a major improvement and makes the trail easier to share between cyclists and other users. This will bring the parklands section trail in line with the new trail section opened in March.

Ironically as I write this it's raining but it has been extremely dry of late. I thought this comparison from late year demonstrates how dry it has been.

### Rainfall at Darebin Parklands

	2017	2018
February	43.2	5.8
March	44.8	30.4
April1	28.3	12.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>216mm</b>	<b>48.6mm</b>

See below several before and after photos to demonstrate what an awesome group of folks we have in the DPA and how the park care days make such an impact a year later.



Mt Puffalo before and after- 2017-2018



## Pete's page [cont.]

This year Katy has planned several areas for park care days with our first one of this year on the 27 May at Zero land again, the photo below shows the impact of previous park care days on a barren site. We intend to plant grass cells into the northern side and hopefully the ground is easier than last year. Katy and I are looking forward to it as it should be a fun day and will transform the site.



**Zero land before and after 2017-2018. The planting will eventually link up with Snakegrass too provide a substantial bank of indigenous planting.**



We have resumed the Indian Myna trapping season in the parklands, and our first week was extremely successful with over 50 birds caught in 4 days. Katy and I will also start monitoring the nest boxes in the next month and we have had nest box maintenance days with Michael Mann who still pops up time to time. Finally, the parklands will be hosting a cyclocross event here on 1st July with our friends from Dirty Deeds. Katy and I have met with the course designer and outlined a course that doesn't go into our important vegetation or planting areas.

**Peter Wiltshire**  
**Head Ranger**

## YARANA RD.SHARED TRAIL

It was a wonderful bonus to have a shared trail put in at the start of the year, linking the parklands with Wingrove Street and the Alphington Train Station. Already the trail is being well utilized, taking walkers and cyclist away from the busy Yarana Road. Darebin Council funded the project but due to budget constraints, it will be completed in several stages. Works to be completed include:

- Replacement of the temporary inner fence with a new fence which will be the new boundary of the MIC site. The fence will be similar to the old one - cyclone mesh with barbed wire on top.
  - The alignment of the new fence will be 0.5m from the trail edge in the section from Wingrove St to a point halfway along Yarana Rd (near the Sheoaks) where the trail turns closer to the road, and then from this point the fence will be 2m from the inner edge of the trail.
  - On the corner of Wingrove and Yarana the fence will cut across at a 45-degree angle to provide in future for a small triangular pocket park or meeting place.
- There will be some clean up works along the trail margins to remove rubbish and debris Council will conduct a safety audit determine the trail is safe to be declared open.
- The old original fence will be removed if council is able to fund it. Otherwise it will remain until some point in the future when a second stage of landscaping is undertaken.



Unfortunately landscaping along the length of the trail has not been included in Council's draft 2018-19 budget. Other concerns, include fixing the awkward path

connections where the trail abruptly meets the existing trail at the parklands and the cumbersome kink and steep slope at the Wingrove Street which are also unfunded.

The DPA has been making submissions to council to add these missing projects to their budget. Thank you to all members who have also contacted council to support this position. The DPA will be make a verbal submission at Council's consultation session on May 31st.



## YARRA LINK TRAIL OPENING

A trail almost 25 years in the making was officially opened in late March to link the Darebin Shared Trail with the Main Yarra Trail. Hundreds of cyclists, walkers and neighbours came along to celebrate and traverse the new section of the trail which links up Sparkes Reserve and the Main Yarra Trail in Kew East.

DPA committee/members as well as support from local government, bicycle users groups and VicRoads over many years has achieved this superb result. The trail link was a feat of engineering and impressive construction, with several bridges and cantilevered sections running between the Darebin, golf courses and schools.

Since the opening foot and bicycle traffic has been steady, from early morning commuters to lunchtime office strollers, the path has been in high use. Rangers at Darebin Parklands have met several people that had now discovered the parklands due to taking a walk up the new path.



**'Bridge over the River Yarra'**

We encourage you to take the time and go for a wander along the new section from the parklands, visiting Napier Waller Reserve (after the 2nd new bridge) where you might see and hear Gang-gang Cockatoos.

Next peer out at the Yarra – Darebin confluence, quite often you can see the clear water of the Darebin mixing with the sediments of the Yarra. We have heard of a few platypus sightings in this location too. Further down is the bridge with a huge span over the Yarra, where you may see King Parrots or Crimson Rosellas, ending up in Willsmere Park. From here you can continue on to the Main Yarra Trail or venture to the right into Willsmere Billabong. If you take the path to the Main Yarra Trail, keep your ear out for frogs calling as you cross the boardwalk over the small swamp on the bend at Willsmere Park. If walking through the billabong keep your eye out for water birds and small birds like Superb Fairy-wrens.

Plans for a Farm Road link for Alphington residents south of Heidelberg Road, to access the trail without having to cross main roads, are still in progress. With VicRoads, local government and LaTrobe Golf Course in support, it should happen in the not too distant future!



Graeme Martin, Community Coalition coordinator and Vic Roads representative address the crowd.



After the opening walkers and cyclists head for the main bridge over the Yarra River,



## PARK CARE DAYS

**May 27th (1pm-3pm)** - Park Care Day - Planting Native grasses and lilies at Zero land (near car park/bush kinder)

### Jemena presentation

Thanks to your efforts in saving power over summer, Jemena is coming to present us with a cheque at our planting day on this Sunday!

**June 24th (1pm-3pm)** - Park Care Day - Planting shrubs and ground covers Ivanhoe Wetland/Crossing Stones

**July 22nd (1pm-3pm)** - Park Care Day - Planting saltbush, daisies and kangaroo grass at Zero land (near car park/bush kinder)

**August 26th (10am-12pm)** - Park Care Day – Planting at Napier Waller Reserve with friends of Darebin Creek (new section of shared trail south of Sparkes Reserve/Heidelberg Rd)

## CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

We had a fantastic turnout of groups, families and solo litter collectors at the March 4th Clean Up Australia Day event at the parklands. Our amazing volunteers dragged out loads of rubbish from the creek and banks. There were reports of one enthusiastic clean-up-er even wading waist deep in the water to retrieve rubbish! At the end of the day we managed to fill two wheelie bins of clean recyclables and there was a trailer load of other rubbish. Some rubbish made us wonder how it made its way to the park; car tyres, bed frames, laptop, vacuum cleaner??!



We believe that the amount of rubbish lodged along the creek was less than other years, perhaps because of no heavy thunderstorms over summer bringing trash down? Perhaps too the work of the Darebin Creek Sweepers who meet monthly for clean-ups have reduced the rubbish floating downstream?!

If you would like to get involved with the Darebin Creek Sweepers, get in contact through their Facebook page.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/darebin-creeksweepers/>

It was great to see so many people dedicating a few hours to making the park look even more amazing.



Thanks to everyone that got involved and Darebin Council for removing the rubbish at the end of the day. Thanks also to all those that do informal cleanups of the creek when visiting- we often find anonymous piles of rubbish dragged from the creek and stacked beside dog bins on Monday mornings. Clean Up Australia Day is an annual event that DPA and DCMC participates in, keep your eye out next March if you would like to get involved.

## WILDILFE SNAPSHOTS

Each newsletter now will feature something of interest from the park. Ranger Katy spotted this?????



The photo shows a female (top) and male (bottom) Soldier Fly, whose larvae help break down leaf matter and debris. This species has pronounced sexual dimorphism, the large female is wingless while the tiny male has wings.

# Up and down the creek



## **News from the Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC) Coordination Division.**

### **Darebin Creek Sweepers**

The Darebin Creek Sweepers are a volunteer group who conduct monthly clean ups along the creek, from Thornbury to Reservoir and beyond. They have recently lost one of their founding members, Sarah, who has moved away from the area, but some other active members are stepping up to fill Sarah's shoes. DCMC have provided some new equipment to replace the worn out tongs and gloves originally donated by Bunnings. Upcoming dates are usually shown on the Friends of Darebin Creek Facebook site, or you can contact our office for more information about how to get in touch and how you can help clean up areas of the Creek outside of the Parklands.

### **DCEP**

The Mernda Park Primary investigation is new initiative by Whittlesea Council which involves a range of automated monitoring equipment installed at a location adjacent to the School. This equipment is wireless connected so students can access real time data about certain elements of waterway health such as turbidity and pH. It is hoped that with real time tracking, school classes that focus on environmental issues will be able to use the information for class based learning. It is aimed to roll the program out to more schools in the area.

### **Water testing.**

With a recent surge in interest for water monitoring along the Darebin Creek, We have had to limit the number of Volunteers that are actively involved in the program, as the monitoring itself only requires a few individuals to complete the testing. It certainly is wonderful to have so much interest in this long running data collection.

### **New shelter**

DCMC has funding to erect a new shelter next to the Environment Centre to replace the current ageing structure. The new shelter will be able to fit a whole class of students. It will hopefully be completed by spring this year.

## **From Adrian: The impact of new subdivisions on our catchments**

As Melbourne grows in an ever-expanding circle, the Darebin and Merri Creeks continue to fall victim to the loss of habitat and green spaces. Large scale subdivision with fancy names such as Kingfisher Estate, Bluestone Views and Quarry Rise.

They are comically known for destroying the features they are so eloquently named after. Maybe the next one could be Kangaroo Meadows?

The Coordination Division recently received another large-scale subdivision application, which will convert two paddocks into 142 allotments on Bindts Road. The bulk of these lots are in the 300-400 sqm size with a few 'super lots' which are higher density sections of the development.

This entire proposal sits adjacent to the Darebin Creek, however there is a 500m buffer between dwellings and the Creek. Of course, the interesting thing that is usually on people's minds, especially to those in the in the southern catchment is water – stormwater to be precise.

Flow rates, water quality, turbidity, litter and plant debris are all concerns that can be exacerbated through large scale developments due to increases in hard surface areas, and low sustainability in initiatives in mass housing. Now the positive outcomes from this are few and far between, with large scale treatment ponds and wetlands which although designed to 'have no impact on downstream peak flows' do not negate the total overall volume of water coming downstream which can always impact sensitive embankments such as the one collapsing in Sparkes Reserve. Another outcome that is actually positive is the increase in vegetation along the waterway and, although modified, creates a more diverse stream channel that has the ability to support a greater diversity of flora and fauna in a generally low habitat area.

So, what's DCMC's role in all of this. Our goal is always to view the Creek and catchment in a holistic manner and provide expert advice in favour of the waterways preservation and enhancement. In the aforementioned sub division, our comments were centred on preservation of heritage dry stone walls, questioning the super lots density, and overall revegetation species and volumes. Hopefully we can continue to improve the upper catchment and consequently the lower parts too!

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**Peter Grenfell - Education Officer**  
**Darebin Creek Management Committee**  
[www.dcmc.org.au](http://www.dcmc.org.au)





## JR NEWS ROUNDUP.

**Archery Day 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

With a great turnout of 12 Junior Rangers, we had our first Archery Day in the park. The amphitheater area provided the perfect setting and Rob McKenzie, Master Bowman from Kew City Bowmen provided expertise and equipment.

The event was held in April during the school holidays, open to kids between 8 and 13 years old. With Rob's instruction the Junior Rangers honed their archery technique and target skills over 2 hours. With all participants able to hit the boards with shots from about 10m.



**Rob McKenzie, Master Bowman shows how it is done**

Archery is a great activity for all ages and physical abilities. It is actually a very safe sport, with ball sports being much more likely to cause injury!



### JR Events for 2018

Keep an eye out on our website [www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au) for upcoming JR events in 2018 including:

- Spotighting with a ranger
- A Celebration of Halloween.
- A Sports Day
- Junior Ranger Campout

**Don't forget to come along to the Community Bonfire Night on 21 September**

Families (or individuals) can join the DPA through our website at [www.dpa.org.au](http://www.dpa.org.au)

Fill in a membership form and pay online, or post a cheque to DPA, PO Box 3, Ivanhoe 3079.

**Thanks Maree and family for your effort in thinking up and organizing yet another great Junior Ranger activity and for providing the photos included in this article.**