



Tanjenong Tales

FFDC Newsletter November 2020

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President's Report

Welcome to the 63rd edition.

What a year! I don't think any of us could have foreseen the way that 2020 would have unfolded, yet under very trying conditions and perseverance, we have had a very productive 2020.

Looking back at the highlights, I'm proud to say that through a combination of great networking and collaboration (and a springly of luck) we have possibly had our most productive year so far. Some of our major projects have been delayed as a natural consequence of the restrictions, but on the whole I would like to include these as our achievements: •

- Clean Up Australia Day • Save our Sugar Gliders •
- Save our Skinks - survey project • Real Time
- Pollution Monitoring • Save our Skinks -
- revegetation project • 14,000 plants returned along
- the corridor • Webinar series • Drain Sock •
- World Environment Day.

I would especially like to thank Maroondah and Knox Councils for helping organise the planting of over 8,000 plants through the use of contractors in our area.

Our eel video is being filmed in December, and will be ready for release in the new year.

We continue to support Knox Environment Society and other community groups for the ongoing battle for the retention of Lake Knox; information can be found here:

<https://www.kes.org.au/home/campaigns/lakeknox>

Congratulations to Jude Dwight for being elected as the new Councillor for Chandler Ward in Knox.

Thank you again to our wonderful members and committee for helping support the group, and without this critical support during this time we simply could not have achieved so much, so well done to you.

Wishing everyone a safe and Merry Christmas and all the best from everyone here at FFDC for 2021.

Anthony Bigelow - President



The endangered Blue-billed Duck on Lake Knox.



Winton Wetlands in Wantirna

Pollution Monitoring

The real time pollution monitoring sensors have been in place transmitting data in 5 locations along the Creek between Baywater and Vermont since June. Some ongoing fine tuning of alerting has been required (given this is new technology), however we are picking up pollution events!

Wonderful to see the same technology we're using is now being trialed by the EPA along 10km of Merlyston Creek near Campbellfield because of the shocking environmental record along the waterway. FFDC was the first community group in Australia to trial the technology. Well done Dave Sharley and Steve Marshall from Bio2labs.

Drain Sock Trial

We are pleased to announce that FFDC has been successful in obtaining a community development grant from Knox Council, for a trial of a drain sock (to capture rubbish). Credit goes to Jude Dwight who put in the grant application for \$17,000 to Council, a few months ago.

We believe this is the first trial of this technology in Melbourne. The intention is a large net is placed over the stormwater pipe at the outlet of Old Joes Creek in Marie Wallace in Bayswater to capture the rubbish before entering the waterway.



Drain Sock

FFDC Annual General Meeting

The new Committee for 2020/21 was elected at the FFDC Annual General Meeting on Thursday 10 September. We have 12 Committee members comprising:

- President: Anthony Bigelow
- Vice President: Jude Dwight
- Secretary: Hannah Skipworth
- Treasurer: Chris Macfarlane
- Membership Secretary: Lex Edmond
- General Committee:
- Charlie Miller, Bill Jones, Matt McCabe, Bruna Iotti, Robert Lee, John Cull and Jesse Oehm

We congratulate Jude Dwight on being elected Vice President, and we welcome back John Cull to the General Committee.

Subsequently, we congratulate Jude Dwight for being elected as the new councillor for Chandler ward in the recent Knox council elections in October. Accordingly, Jude is stepping back from her role as Vice President of FFDC. She will remain on the General Committee. Charlie Miller has resumed the role of Vice President.



Pollution monitoring sensor at HE Parker Reserve

Winton Wetlands management plan

Melbourne Water has a 10 year lease from VicRoads to manage the Winton Wetlands site along the creek in Wantirna.

Melbourne Water is finalising a 7 year Biodiversity Conservation Management plan for the site.

The main objectives of the plan are:

- to maintain, enhance and restore native vegetation and faunal habitat;
- to protect and enhance habitat for threatened flora and fauna species;
- to improve knowledge regarding the extent, abundance and trajectories of threatened and significant flora and fauna species;
- to reduce the extent of weed species including kikuya, water couch, pittosporum and blackberry, and eliminate these where possible; and
- to control and monitor pest animals across the site including rabbits and foxes.

We will keep you updated on progress. There are likely to be some planting events organised over the next few years.

EoDC2 Update

Planning works for the future EoDC2 Phase 2 are progressing.

The working group, including FFDC, has been involved in several workshops over the last 12 months. Melbourne Water is now finalising plans and a business case for Board approval for 2 key focus areas for this phase:

- Improving biodiversity outcomes in the Middle Dandenong Creek catchment (this includes our area of the creek).
- Reducing pollution in Old Joes and Bungalook Creek catchments (the known main sources of pollution in Dandenong Creek).

The initial budget allocation is for \$15 million dollars over 3 years which will include more billabongs, tree planting and increased pollution monitoring, compliance and enforcement.

FFDC YouTube Channel

FFDC has launched a YouTube channel. To watch, go to YouTube and search for First Friends of Dandenong Creek. We appreciate the efforts of Hannah Skipworth for setting this up.



Winton Wetlands map (inside red border)



Tawny Frogmouth owls nesting along the creek

Saving Our Skinks Project

The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on outdoor gatherings has meant the project is on hold. We are hoping we can restart in the summer months and will keep you updated on developments.

Save our Sugar Gliders Project

Mapping of habitat corridors is occurring at present within Heathmont, however the rollout of the nesting boxes will not be occurring until early 2021.

If you are interested in supporting this work and can host a nest box in your garden or school, then please contact us at: ffdc1999@gmail.com. To date, we have around 16 Heathmont residents who have registered their interest.

Please note, you must fall within the Sugar Glider survey zone, which is the area bordered by Canterbury Road, Heathmont Road, Dandenong Creek and Wantirna Road.

Eels Video

The background to the video is we are looking to cover a number of aspects including the amazing lifecycle of the Short-finned eels in our creek, and how that's being affected through pollution. We have received partial funding from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation at present, and will be working with Remember the Wild to produce the video in December.

Lizard Lounge Project

The implementation of our successful \$13,000 Federal Government grant, in aid of sensitive revegetation of land for the Glossy Grass skinks, is currently underway. FFDC is working with Maroondah Council and David De Angelis to deliver the project by the end of this year. The intention is to convert previously mown grass on council land along the creek in North Bayswater, known as Connolly Reserve, over to skink friendly habitat, once the survey for the site is completed.

Maroondah Council commenced site preparations in early November for planting 2,300 specially selected plants for skink habitat in December.

Seminar series with Victorian Environment Friends Network (VEFN)

FFDC recently collaborated with the VEFN to present 4 online seminars on a range of topics including "Fauna in the 'burbs, not just the bush" and "The value of community groups and citizen scientists contributing records to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas".

The seminars attracted over 1000 registrations via Eventbrite. You can review these seminars on our YouTube channel.

Dates to mark on your calendar

FFDC Clean Up Australia Day Event - Sunday 7th March

FFDC World Environment Day Planting Event - Saturday 5th June 2021

Details of these events will be provided by email and on our website and Facebook page closer to the day.

Spotted

Nesting Tawny Frogmouth owls spotted by Roger Nicoll along the creek. See photo, courtesy of Roger, on page 3.

This newsletter is published by First Friends of Dandenong Creek Inc. We acknowledge the support of Maroondah Council for providing the printed copies.

Next edition of the newsletter is in March 2021, please email us your ideas for articles or stories of interest by the end of February 2021 to: ffdc1999@gmail.com.