



# Ponderings

SEASONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
FRIENDS OF MOONEE PONDS CREEK

SPRING 2019 | ISSUE 64

advocate

educate

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate



Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc

## Come and Celebrate!

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek

# 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Sunday 1 December

2:00pm - 4:00pm

Oak Park Sports Pavillion  
(Next to Oak Park Swimming Pool)

563 Pascoe Vale Road, Oak Park  
(Melway 16 H7)

*Bring your memories and photos*

***Bring a plate to share***

### Other activities:

- A guided walk to see the site for the first removal of concrete along the creek.
- A visit to the *Living Stream Project*, Herbert Street, Pascoe vale South.

*Members, friends and families*

*All welcome.*

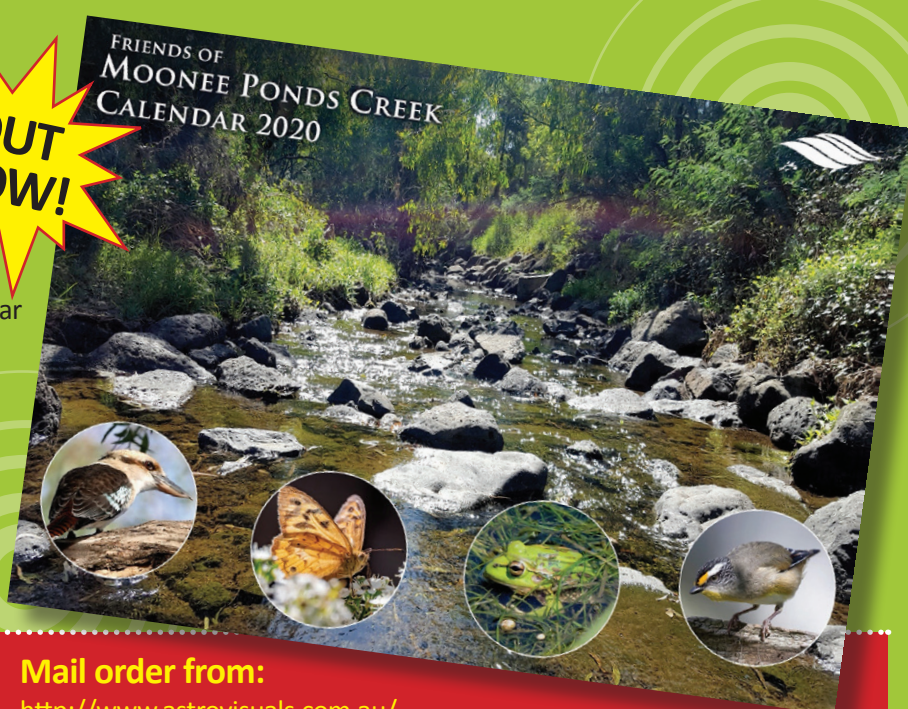


# Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Calendar 2020

OUT NOW!

Created by David Widdowson, our inaugural calendar is now available featuring over 50 photos taken by friends of Moonee Ponds Creek and regular contributors to our Facebook.

The calendar tells the story of the Creek from Greenvale to the Yarra with images of places of interest and natural treasures, especially birds, found along the way.



## How to buy a copy:

RRP is \$12, \$10 for members.

Available from newsagents in surrounding suburbs (no discount available)

## Mail order from:

<http://www.astrovisuals.com.au/>

for \$10 a copy plus \$5 post.

More distribution details: [mooneepondscreek.org.au](http://mooneepondscreek.org.au)

# Waterways of the West Discussion Paper

The Waterways of the West Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) released their eagerly awaited Discussion Paper for public consultation on Tuesday 8 October 2019.

There will be opportunities to discuss the Discussion Paper Key Directions through Workshops and drop-in Information Sessions and to lodge submissions online, details as below:

## Community Workshops:

These are formal, facilitated small group workshops designed to give participants in-depth discussions about the aspirations and opportunities for the Waterways of the West than at the drop-in sessions. Registration required.

Community workshops will be held:

- **Melton:** Tuesday 15 October 2019, 5.45pm – 8:00pm
- **Werribee:** Wednesday 16 October 2019, 5.45pm – 8:00pm
- **Sunbury:** Monday 21 October 2019, 5.45pm – 8:00pm
- **Footscray:** Tuesday 22 October 2019, 5.45pm – 8:00pm

Venues will be updated on the *Engage Vic* website.

Please RSVP through this link:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/waterways-west>

## Drop-in Information Sessions:

These are informal events, designed for community members to drop in at any time. Attendees will be able to view information about the project, chat to project staff about the work that has been done to date and provide some feedback about the aspirations and opportunities described in the Discussion Paper.



Lower Moonee Ponds Creek by Tony Smith.

Drop-in sessions will be held:

- **Melton:** Friday 25 October 2019, 2:00pm – 4:00pm
- **Werribee:** Saturday 26 October 2019, 10:00am – 12:00pm
- **Footscray:** Monday 28 October 2019, 2:00pm – 4:00pm
- **Sunbury:** Tuesday 29 October 2019, 5:00pm – 7:00pm

Venues will be updated on the *Engage Vic* website. RSVPs not required.

## Discussion Paper Online and Submissions:

The Discussion Paper is accessible online and submissions can be lodged via <https://engage.vic.gov.au/waterways-west>

## Closing date for submissions

11.59pm on Sunday 17 November 2019.



# Down the Drain

## Lost Tributaries of the MPC Part 4: Westbreen Creek

..... by David Widdowson .....

There is good news as we continue to head north exploring the lost tributaries of the Moonee Ponds Creek – more of the creeks are above ground! So whereas Melville Creek was completely undergrounded, Five Mile Creek did manage to preserve some of its middle and lower sections. Now as we get to Westbreen Creek (in Glenroy and Pascoe Vale), large swathes are still above ground, even if much of the rest of the creek was turned into main drain 4340.

Back in the 1840s, the creek was a popular picnic spot for John Pascoe Fawcner – it ran close by his 800-acre property “Pascoeville”. He was known to show visitors the lyre birds that inhabited a natural fern valley which he called “Blue Bell Dell”. By the late 1800s, most of Pascoe Vale had been cleared for dairy farming, with land around the creek being considered of poor quality, infested with weeds and feral goats.



The name "Westbreen" is believed to derive from the local school which opened in 1923. District Inspector Davies suggested Westbreen as the school's name, being a combination of the names of two bus proprietors, Weston and Miss Breen (one of her buses appears at left in Bell St). It is not known how widely used the name Westbreen Creek was, it does not appear on any early maps and I could only

find one mention of the name in a newspaper before 1954. The name only became official in 2016 thanks to the work of Alex English of Moreland Council.



The creek valley can be seen in the background of this photo of Pascoe Vale Station in the 1930s, showing how few houses existed at the time.

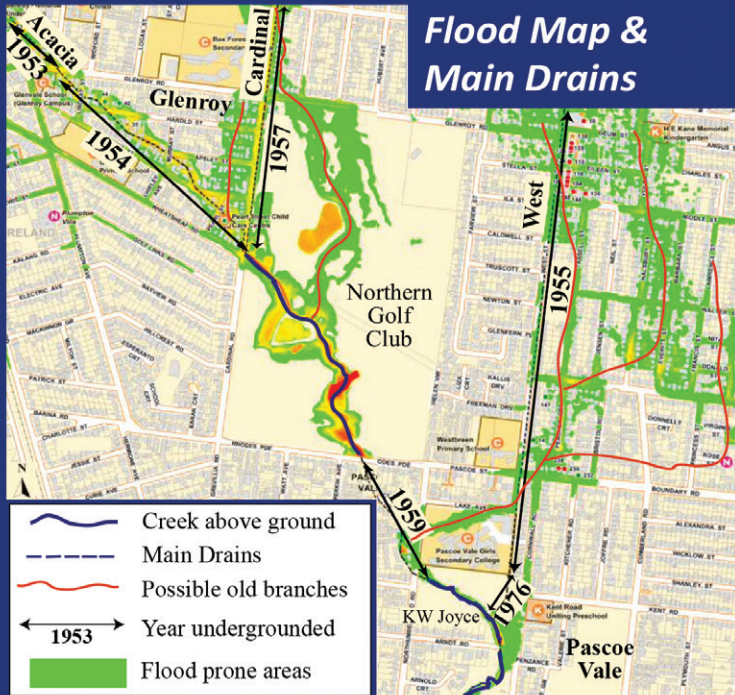


Aerial photos from *Melbourne 1945* show how little suburban development had occurred by then; there were few houses as the area was still predominantly farmland. The area marked “Blue Bell Dell” was used as a military dump during World War 2. In the post-war years, from 1946 to 1960, the Westbreen sub-basin became urbanised, at least the part that wasn't being used as a council tip! Increased housing development led to complaints from new residents about "mosquitoes, rats and stench". Residents and "Progress" groups lobbied strongly for the creek to be undergrounded, citing disease and safety concerns, and that flooding was likely to occur, as it did in 1963 and 1978. Interesting to see how "progress" groups once lobbied against nature and now do the opposite!



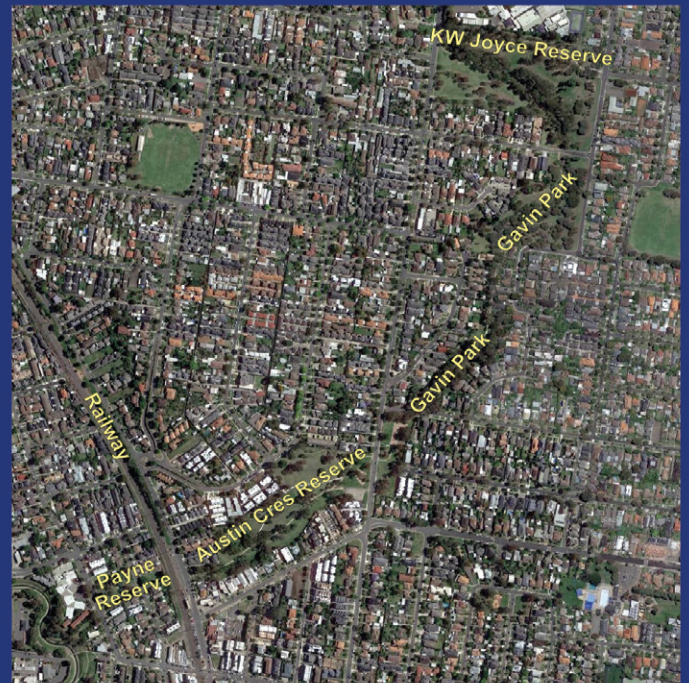
The First Melways Street Directory from 1966 shows "Blue Bell Dell Reserve" but the creek that flows through it is not named.

## Westbreen Creek (continued)



A modern map of the Main Drains and flood-prone areas (courtesy of the SES) shows the current state of the Westbreen Creek sub-basin. Remaining above-ground sections in the Northern Golf Club, K W Joyce Reserve and Gavin Park have been marked in blue. The sections that were turned in to Main Drains are shown with dashed lines – it can be seen there were three main branches of the creek feeding water from the Glenroy/ Pascoe Vale plateau down to the Moonee Ponds Creek. I have labelled these as *Acacia*, *Cardinal* and *West* after the Drains they now supply. Other possible old minor branches are shown in red, based on the Melbourne 1945 aerial photos, flood prone areas, the various remnant valleys, and some speculation! The name "Lake Avenue", just north of the Pascoe Vale Girls' School, offers some clue to its history, unless it was named after a Mr Lake!

The years indicated for when the various other creek sections were undergrounded are based on the MMBW book "Development of the Moonee Ponds Creek Drainage System" from 1981. It can be seen that undergrounding first occurred in the upper parts of the basin where the watercourses were generally ill-defined, most of this work being done in the 1950s. However, creation of these drains then lead to more erosion in the remaining open streams, leading to progressively more of the creek being undergrounded in the 1960s and 1970s, until the final section was completed in Gavin Park in 1979.



The current aerial view, courtesy of Google Earth, shows the reserves that now make up the Westbreen Creek linear park.



By 2007, the creek in K W Joyce looked like this – with minimal landscaping and vegetation – until there was a major effort by the Friends of Westbreen Creek Group (led by Judy Allen, and in association with Moreland Council) to beautify the creek.



Twelve years later, the view is vastly different – a spectacular example of naturalisation in the above-ground sections of the Creek. Moreland Council's *Westbreen Development Plan* (2018) talks of creating new wetland areas in the lower reaches, which would also restore more of the Creek to how it used to be!

Next time: Chapman Main Drain

# Ocean Crusaders Paddle Against Plastic

..... 1 September 2019 .....

The 2nd of three 2019 events planned by Ocean Crusaders took place on September 1st to tackle again the litter strewn Lower Moonee Ponds Creek. In a video posted on Facebook Ian Thomson lamented the volume of rubbish so soon after our previous clean-up.

As Ian reported after the event "Moonee Ponds Creek is 443kg lighter tonight courtesy of 43 amazing volunteers who braved the cold and winds on Father's Day. Polystyrene again topped the tallies along with over 1600 plastic bottles." Ian thanked the Port of Melbourne and the City of Melbourne for sponsoring the event and thanked partners *Beach Patrol Australia* and *Love Our Street 3008* as well as the *Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek*. We are truly blessed to have Ocean Crusaders on our side in the war against pollution along our Creek.

Join us on December 1st for "Paddle Against Plastic" take 3 for 2019 (details in Diary Dates).



Ian drove relays along the bank collecting the filled rubbish bags



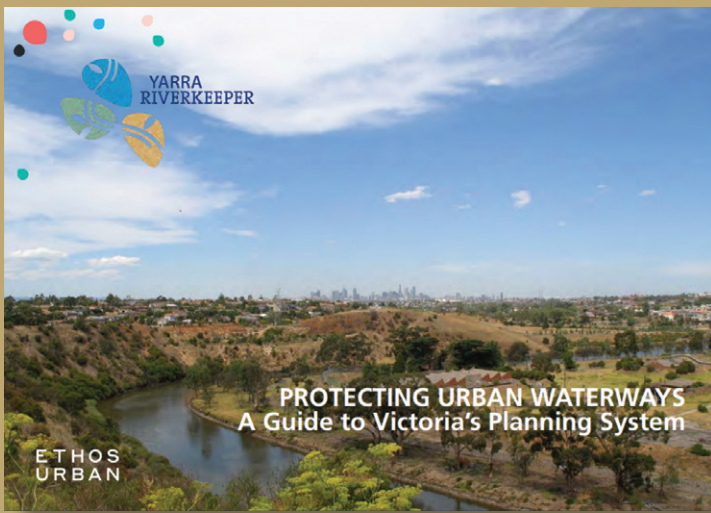
Canoes and the shallow draft Ocean Crusaders boat plied the waters



Tiny pieces of plastic challenged volunteers young and old



Bring on a container deposit scheme PLEASE!!



## Protecting Urban Waterways – A Guide To Victoria’s Planning System

The Yarra Riverkeeper Association has released a book “Protecting Urban Waterways – A Guide to Victoria’s Planning System”. The launch in September was attended by Tony Smith and Carolyn Layton. Funded by the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation the purpose of the Guide is “to assist Community Groups in understanding how planning controls operate, and how they may be utilised to support their aims and Objectives” . Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek were approached to provide some photographs of Moonee Ponds Creek scenery and wildlife. David Hocking and Anna Lanigan were delighted to have their images chosen.

<http://yarrariver.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Protecting-Urban-Waterways-II.pdf>

<http://yarrariver.org.au/our-vision-aims-and-objectives/>

## Clean-up along Cross Keys Reserve

It was a sunny August 17th morning and can you believe it we were still dragging oBikes out of the creek. Five volunteers collected a depressing pile of rubbish in less than two hours. More raids are planned so stay tuned for the next one or better still be inspired to create your own. Thanks to our leader “Prickly Pear” and keep a look-out on our Facebook for future events.



## Did You Know?

There is a Tawny Frogmouth baby boom happening along the Moonee Ponds Creek and its tributaries. No less than six nests are occupied between Five Mile Creek and the Trestle Bridge. Stay tuned to our Facebook for updates and we’ll post an offspring report in the next Ponderings.

## Planting at Coopers Street Westmeadows

On September 8th, a hardy bunch of volunteers braved the cold and rainy conditions to get Melissa Doherty's planned 500 plants into the ground. The scheduled helpers, 1<sup>st</sup> Tullapark Scouts were a no-show and the planting almost cancelled when other volunteers, some with their children turned up eager to get damp and dirty. As it turned out some of our rescuers were a group brought along by Kane Travis, ex Melbourne Water, and a long time friend of Julie Law. They celebrated their reunion by planting a tree together, then as the rain set in we sheltered under a much bigger tree and indulged in the traditional Upper Moonee Ponds Creek reward, a fabulous Devonshire Tea provided by Julie, Kym and Melissa.



## Hume Gardens for Wildlife

Hume City Council is starting a new program, Gardens for Wildlife (G4W), where community volunteers will visit residents and offer advice on making their gardens more wildlife friendly. Hume's program will be based on the incredibly popular G4W programs now being run in several other local government areas, all originally inspired by Knox City Council. These collaborative partnerships between community members and councils have grown to become a network, sharing information and resources. Several meetings have taken place with the most recent in September well attended. Guest speakers spoke about how people are transforming gardens across Melbourne, to nurture our unique flora, fauna and natural environments.

In urban areas, much of the indigenous vegetation has been cleared. But it's these local native species that are best adapted to the soils and climate in the region, so it makes sense to use those same species as habitat for native wildlife. Nature Kit (<http://maps.biodiversity.vic.gov.au/viewer/?viewer=NatureKit>) provides maps of the Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) that used to exist at your place. For example, the EVC in Hume was mainly Plains Grassland and Plains Grassy Woodland on the flatter areas, with Escarpment Shrubland down in the valleys and Riparian Woodland along waterways. You can then research the EVC Benchmark which describes the plant community and lists some of the common species that were found in it.

You can find out more about the network and the G4W program at [www.gardensforwildlifevictoria.com](http://www.gardensforwildlifevictoria.com) Hume residents who are interested in becoming a volunteer garden guides are encouraged to contact Melissa Doherty, [MelissaDo@hume.vic.gov.au](mailto:MelissaDo@hume.vic.gov.au)



Kane Travis







# Reminiscing with Maurice

Another wonderful photo posted by Maurice Austin on our Facebook in recent weeks features Debney's Tannery on the MPC, "taken from the Flemington Bridge Station platform "some time ago!". The tannery opened in 1876 and at the time was Flemington's 3rd largest industry (after the stockyards and abattoirs), and a major local employer. The area around it became known as Debney's Paddock. Prone to flooding the 15ha site was acquired by Melbourne

City Council for reclamation and conversion to public open space. Later plans to develop the site for public housing was branded by the Herald as "filching the people's parklands". (The more things change, the more things stay the same!). Debney's Tannery closed in 1935 so that gives the window of opportunity for the photograph. Following concrete reinforcement, Mains Bridge on the right became the Victoria's first tramway bridge in 1913, prior to this passengers had to walk the 200yards between the connecting tram services.

Find out more at :  
<https://www.victorianplaces.com.au/flemington>



## Creeky Links

**Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek:** [mooneepondscreek.org.au](http://mooneepondscreek.org.au)  
[facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek](https://facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek)

**Friends of Merri Creek:** [friendsofmerricreek.org.au/](http://friendsofmerricreek.org.au/)

**Friends of Edgars Creek:** [foec.org.au](http://foec.org.au)

**Friends of Steele Creek:** [facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekInc](https://facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekInc)

**Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley:** [fmvonline.com](http://fmvonline.com)

**Bowerbird discussion website:** [bowerbird.org.au/projects/5249](http://bowerbird.org.au/projects/5249)

**Woodlands Historic Park:** [whp.altervista.org/](http://whp.altervista.org/)

**The Werribee River Association:** [werribeeriver.org.au](http://werribeeriver.org.au)

Contact us if you have any other links to share

## Important notice

### POSITION VACANT

Urgently seeking a volunteer to take over the role of editor - contacting contributors and preparing copy for the newsletter designer Ray Hehr.

This is a great chance for new ideas for content.

Please contact:  
Anna, **0421 578 523**  
Editor

### “Happy Wattle Day” planting at Holbrook Reserve, Brunswick West

A small but dedicated group of volunteers did a terrific job at Holbrook Reserve getting 600 plants into the ground. It was billed as a celebration of National Wattle Day, but was competing with Father’s Day and our Paddle against Plastic event on the same morning. The planted wild flowers, grasses, ground covers, bushes and some trees will improve the Moonee Ponds Creek Flyway and attract the native pollinators. The reserve edges a steep embankment down to the concreted creek so planters had to be careful. A popular off-leash area for dog walkers and families attending the nearby Cricket Club, it’s a tricky spot to find along a track at the end of Jewell Crescent that goes under the tollway into Club Pavilion car park.



### Sheils Reserve Planting

A great turnout of locals joined Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek to create a perfect garden around the new play space in Sheils Reserve. Hundreds of plants were put in on the day. It was lovely to see so many youngsters helping. They will enjoy seeing their plants grow, attracting the birds, bees and butterflies. Some of the locals helping live in the flats around the Reserve so this is THEIR garden. It will look beautiful and will be well loved. The official opening of the park takes place 4pm Tuesday 22 October. Please RSVP to Moreland’s Civic Events team [civicevents@moreland.vic.gov.au](mailto:civicevents@moreland.vic.gov.au) if you would like to join.



### Moreland City Council Biodiversity Action Plan

Moreland City Council are in the early stages of producing a Biodiversity Action Plan for the municipality. Community consultation for the plan will begin in November and more information on how you can get involved will be released shortly. For further information contact Vince Andreana on 8311 4386 or Email: [vandreana@moreland.vic.gov.au](mailto:vandreana@moreland.vic.gov.au)

### Austin Crescent Playspace

The play space at Austin Crescent Reserve on Northumberland Road in Pascoe Vale has been upgraded and is looking fantastic. This is one of the first steps in Westbreen Creek Conservation and Development Plan and it opened just in time for September school holidays. The old play space across the road in Gavin Park will be demolished to make way for ambitious landscaping that will include a wetland enhancing the Westbreen Creek biodiversity. "Did you know" one special local resident has already given its seal of approval 😊

To view the plans, visit Moreland Council's website:  
<https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/austin-crescent-play-upgrade/>



### Kernan Street/Avenue Planting

A great community planting day took place on Sun July 21 at Kernan Avenue, Pascoe Vale South. On a beautiful day, 22 volunteers planted 650 plants into this reclaimed and repurchased corner of land abutting residences and along the Moonee Ponds Creek. Moreland Council must be thanked for firstly, purchasing the land and secondly, for planning the revegetation, layout, paths, adding a bench seat and access from the nearby Tate playground, creating a very pleasant open space reserve. It's looking beautiful. Mel Yuan of Brunswick Communities for Nature joined us on the day with an impressive collection of inexpensive indigenous plants for sale.



### Creating Gardens for Wildlife in Moreland

Local Moreland resident and wildlife advocate **Elaine Stevenson** has created a Facebook Group to bring together residents with a common interest of improving habitat in our gardens.

For further information and heaps of great advice go to:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/519953362127357/>

# Planting at Kensington Embankment



On August 3rd, despite the threat of gloomy weather forecast, 26 volunteers put in close to 500 plants to create a wonderful understorey along the Kensington Embankment of the Moonee Ponds Creek. It was great to be joined by quite a few locals who responded to Kaye's letterbox drop in neighbouring streets. Kensington Embankment is a welcome corridor of green open space that is an essential contribution to the Moonee Ponds Creek Flyway. It is a credit to the determination of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek to work against the odds in a section of the creek that has had more than its fair share of infrastructure abuse. And our thanks go to Melbourne Water who gave us a community grant for the project.



*Indigofera growing nicely along the bank*



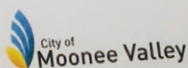
## Wildlife-friendly gardening in Moonee Valley

Moonee Valley Council is embracing the Gardens for Wildlife project tapping into the experts of well established areas in the Eastern suburbs. Their new publication Wildlife-friendly gardening – Creating spaces for native plants and animals in Moonee Valley is now available on their web site. The booklet contains a wealth of information including what plants to use and where to get them.

Go to: <http://mvcc.vic.gov.au/wildlifegardens> Council invites residents to join Gardens for Wildlife, a network of residents who nurture local indigenous plants and native wildlife in their gardens. To connect with others in the network visit: <https://www.facebook.com/GardensforWildlifeMV/>

### Wildlife-friendly gardening

Creating spaces for native plants and animals in Moonee Valley



## Woodlands Park Essendon



Woodlands Park Essendon is undergoing a make-over and the bulldozers have been busy for months. Before works could commence Moonee Valley Conservation Officer, Millie Burke, had the task of relocating wildlife residents. While most of the birdlife could make their own arrangement others had to be captured and relocated. Advice was sought from DELWP to ensure the welfare of the turtles in the area. Indigenous to our area the Long-necked Turtles were relocated to Afton Street Wetland (Turtle Paradise in Moonee Valley ). The Short-necked Turtles likely placed in the lake by well meaning pet owners were sent on a holiday to Latrobe University. Here is a video of their transfer: <https://youtu.be/wZddr09Ycd8> The Domestic Ducks were transported to another location. Did you know they can't fly? Despite the sub-optimal conditions Australian Wood Ducks with ducklings in tow have insisted on returning to Woodlands Park. Welcome rain is leaving a few puddles for them. For more information on the Woodlands Park Master Plan go to: <https://www.mvcc.vic.gov.au/Experience-Moonee-Valley/Parks-and-playgrounds/Park-upgrades-and-projects/Park-Master-Plans/Woodlands-Park-and-Salmon-Reserve-Master-Plan>



# Sightings

We've been used to seeing the wonderful images of birds of prey by Dennis Hocking over the past few issues but what a treat it is to see the smaller birds pairing up and settling in along the Creek and Wetlands. It's a great reward for long time Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek who, together with Melbourne Water and Hume and Moreland Councils, have transformed the Valley into a very special habitat.

Australasian Pipit



20.09.2019



White-winged Triller (M) 20.09.2019



White-winged Triller (F)



Golden-headed Costicola



Red-browed Finch 24.09.2019



Rufous Whistler (M)



Rufous Whistler (F) 24.09.2019



Spotted Pardalotte (F)



Spotted Pardalotte (M);

Australian Weed Warbler



## Creek Watch

Please help by reporting rapid change of water levels or water discolouration along the creek:

- High water flows coming out of drains during a period of no rain could indicate a leaking water main or underground burst pipe. To report this, contact **Yarra Valley Water** for the east side of the bank and **City West Water** for the west side of the bank.
- If the creek water is yellow or white or otherwise discoloured, this could indicate trade waste being dumped in the creek. This needs to be **urgently reported to the EPA**.

## Ponderings

welcome photos and written contributions from our readers. Please send contributions to: [fompc.ponderings@gmail.com](mailto:fompc.ponderings@gmail.com)

# Diary Dates

## Spring Calendar

Last minute cancellations and changes will be posted to our [Facebook](#) page.

Date/Time	Where	Group/Contact Information
<b>Monday 21 October</b> 6.30pm	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek <b>Annual General Meeting and Election of Office bearers</b> followed by General Meeting. Sam Merrifield Library, 762 Mt. Alexander Rd, Moonee Ponds.	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Kaye Oddie 9329 0635
<b>Tuesday 22 October</b> 4:00pm	<b>Official opening of the new park</b> at Shiels Reserve, Duggan Street , Brunswick West, (Melway 29 B5)	Please rsvp to Moreland's Civic Events team <a href="mailto:civicevents@moreland.vic.gov.au">civicevents@moreland.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Sunday 1 December</b> 9:00am-12.00pm	Ocean Crusaders Clean-up Day Lower Moonee Ponds Creek Ron Barassi Snr Park, Docklands (Mel 2E A5)	Details and registration via Ocean Crusaders website: <a href="http://www.OceanCrusaders.org">www.OceanCrusaders.org</a> 0447 TURTLE (887 853)
<b>Sunday 1 December</b> 2:00pm - 4:00pm	<b>Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek 30th Anniversary</b> (details on front page)	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Kaye Oddie 9329 0635 Anna Lanigan 0421 578 523

*Join the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek for \$20 per year*

*Help preserve and improve the Moonee Ponds Creek's natural environment.*

For information and to join, go to:

[mooneepondscreek.org.au/join-us/](http://mooneepondscreek.org.au/join-us/) and complete the membership form or write to: **PO Box 54, Essendon Victoria. 3040.**

The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek supports child safe environments for its activities.



## Bi-Monthly Meetings

Held the following dates at the Sam Merrifield Library, 762 Mt. Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds commencing at 6:30pm.

**Meeting dates:**

- **21 October (AGM)** • **17 December** •