

Editorial : Review of Monash VPO Amendments

The panel hearing is over and the findings have been published. The result is a win for conservation in Monash with the panel recommending that the planning amendment be abandoned and the VPO retained.

Community submissions were almost equally divided between those supporting the amendment and those opposing it. However, the panel conclusion was as follows :

“ The Panel sees the Amendment as failing to retain appropriate focus on wider landscape character issues by proposing changes that the Panel considers goes too far in relaxing the permit requirements of the Vegetation Protection Overlay”

The future of the amendment will be discussed at the September Council meeting, which will be held at the Monash Civic Centre on Tuesday 24 September, from 7.30pm.

Annie Mayo, an engaging guest Speaker on the topic of “Bush Heritage”

Have you ever considered buying a bush block to save a patch of bush for posterity? Many people do and you will find many small reserves scattered throughout the country “in memory of” some committed environmentally sensitive individual. Such reserves serve certain purposes, for education, to preserve special local vegetation or simply to provide a wayside stop for travellers, but there is a better way. Think, instead, of the power of the

collective. Not individual action but the collective power of hundreds or thousands of individuals committed to buying back large swathes of the country in a manner that targets endangered ecosystems and biolinks . A collective with the resources to employ scientific professionals to conduct restoration work, research and experimentation. Such an organisation exists and it is called ***Bush Heritage***.

Bush heritage has been spectacularly successful in raising funds and purchasing large privately owned properties as they have come on to the market. With an aim to protect 1% of Australia, Bush Heritage properties currently total nearly a million hectares located in all states. Environmental credentials are high with species increases of 200% to 600% recorded at their Boolcoomatta station in S.A.

If you're thinking of buying a patch of bush for conservation, think again and consider the benefits of contributing to an organisation which can provide a strategic outlook to conservation. You may not be able to build your weekend retreat there, but you can visit many of the reserves and contribute to scientific research.

Plant of the month Dianella

This is one of the first native plants that I “discovered” many years ago. Growing in a narrow strip under a pipe fence at the boundary of Cheong Park in Croydon, this strappy, undistinguished plant had escaped the mowers and the council had not yet discovered that Roundup can be used to clear such untidy areas. When spring came around the tiny flowers revealed the true

charm of this plant. Petals of intense blue surround six prominent stamens of a brilliant orange / yellow, a perfect complimentary colour match. The flowers are followed by berries which are larger than the flowers, of the same intense blue and, at a distance are often mistaken for flowers. The plant is *Dianella admixta* (formerly *Dianella revoluta*). It is incredibly tough, often growing in seemingly solid clay, balanced on the edge of road cuttings and in dry desert dunes. It spreads by thick rhizomes which can be used for propagation. Samples I salvaged from roadworks many years ago are still being used by me for propagation in my garden.

Dianella admixta grows in many places in the Damper Creek Reserve, usually inhabiting the upper, drier slopes away from the creek.



A related plant, *Dianella longifolia*, is planted in large numbers as part of the riparian revegetation. *Dianella longifolia* is a larger plant with a more lush appearance than *D. admixta*. Flowers are a paler blue, as are the

berries. Some nice stands of *D. longifolia* can be found at the Stephenson's road end of the reserve near the Southern boundary. Probably better known is *Dianella Tasmanica* which is much larger than either *D. admixta* or *D. longifolia*. This plant has been available as a nursery plant for many years and is a lush inhabitant of damp, fern areas, growing up to 1.5 metres tall. Naturally growing in moist gullies and alpine areas, this plant is common in the Dandenongs but has not been recorded in Damper Creek.

For the home gardener there are a number of recently introduced cultivars which will fulfil traditional landscaping needs better than the "heritage" varieties. Look for *Dianella* "Little Jess" or *Dianella Lucia*". If you are a purist you will avoid these cultivars but they perform well and are more vigorous, and if they increase knowledge and awareness of native plants, so much the better.

Our Annual General Meeting

The August meeting will be our AGM. To my knowledge we have nominations for all positions, so you won't be press ganged into a committee position. Additional nominations for any position would be welcomed. Please come and hear of our achievements for the last year and the prospects for the coming year. Most importantly, meet the new committee members.

Like us on Facebook

Don't forget to check us out on Facebook. Your photo submissions, both recent and archival, will be welcomed.

Important dates to remember:

	August	Notes
Meeting:	Wed 28th - 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
AGM		
W-Bee	Sun Sept 1st 10-00am to 12-30pm	Middle Bridge
	September	
Meeting:	Wed 25th- 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
W-Bee	Sun Sept 29th 10-00am to 12-30 pm	Middle Bridge

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Damper Creek Bushland Reserve: part of the Yarra Catchment.

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The Newsletter of

**FRIENDS OF
DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.**

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DAMPER CREEK DOINGS

August 2013

