

## Editorial :

It is one of the aims of organisations such as ours to fight for the preservation of our local environment. The foresight of the original members of the Damper Creek Conservation and Development Group has paid handsome dividends as the continuous efforts directed towards the creek and its surroundings have resulted in a piece of bushland which is the envy of adjoining municipalities. It is, therefore, a matter of considerable concern to read (The Age, Mon Aug 8<sup>th</sup>) that Monash features in a list of only 8 councils with 10% or less of land dedicated to public open space. Now the "Green" side of me says that at least 90% of the natural environment has been lost but the situation is, at the same time, both better and worse than this. Better because there is a great deal of private space which contributes to the environment. Monash is blessed with copious backyards sporting a vast array of trees and other plants which augment the reserves within Monash. On the other hand it is worse, because much of that open space is taken up with sportsgrounds and other open spaces which, though they serve an important community purpose, support little more than a covering of exotic grasses and a few shrubs around the periphery.

I have often expressed the psychological and physical benefits of parks in this newsletter, but it is nice to find a supporting quote from one in high public office: ***"Public open space is one of the essential ingredients of a healthy city and a healthy population."***(Vichealth acting chief executive John Fitzgerald). Thus the preservation of open space and passive recreation areas

such as remnant bushland, is vital for our mental health as well as our environment.

Although loss of reserved space is not common (The near loss of the Sadie Street reserve is, I hope, an exception), the city of Monash is constantly losing elements of its' environment as residential blocks are being turned into medium and high density developments, roads are widened and grassy areas paved for driveways and car parks.

I am sure that the councillors of our fine city are proud of their environmental credentials but this is no time of complacency when there is talk of relaxing restrictions on removal of trees in streets and reserves and also calls for removing the Vegetation Protection Overlay on private land.

**You can help support the retention of trees in streets and on public land by attending the next council meeting at the Civic Centre in Springvale Rd at 7-30 on Tuesday August 30<sup>th</sup>.**

By pure coincidence, I accidentally removed another article which was on the following page to the abovementioned article in The Age (Page 6 Aug 8<sup>th</sup>). The article referred to grants for the "Climate Communities Fund". Community groups applying for grants from this fund have been told that the programme has closed and their applications will not be assessed. Considering this programme was passed with bipartisan support, it seems the current government is indulging in political doublespeak. The cessation of this programme is a slap in the face for grassroots community groups. The Friends of Damper Creek Reserve also relies on grants to fund projects within the reserve, are

the programmes we rely on subject to such a cavalier attitude? Perhaps even Melbourne's "Green Wedges" will be ignored as development takes priority over sustainability?

## Waterwatch in Damper Creek

For the last two years a group of us from the Friends have been conducting monthly tests on the quality of the water that flows through our beloved creek. This testing is part of a broader scheme called Waterwatch which is supported and supervised by Melbourne Water as part of their catchment monitoring. We also get considerable support from City of Monash who, among other things, let us use a test kit they own and maintain.

A number of chemical and physical tests are carried out as well as current conditions and recent weather history. This information is combined with data from other volunteer groups from all over Victoria.

The good news is that generally we have found the Damper Creek arms to be quite healthy in terms of what is expected in a small urban stream.

The Damper Creek watershed drains an area roughly from the union of Stephenson's and Highbury Roads, around a line approximating Leeds Rd to the reservoir and across to West of Mt Waverley station. Two main streams originate from this catchment, one originating near Stephenson's Road (the North branch) and the other through the Mount Waverley Secondary College (the East branch). The two branches join behind Alvie Hall.

Our waterwatch team has discovered that the two branches of Damper Creek are significantly different and there are also

considerable seasonal changes in the results. We don't really know why but we hope that eventually, with expert help, we may solve these mysteries.

### Working Bee

The July working bee was most successful with over a thousand plants now gracing the slopes below Alice street to the bridge. We had many volunteers turn up to help and the work was almost finished when we took a break for morning tea.

The August working bee will be conducted in the same area unless the Bush Crew assigns another area to us. Your help is welcome, even if you cannot weed or plant. Help with morning tea, welcoming new members and handing out information is also required.

Our morning teas always seem to turn up some surprises, the soups supplied by Robert Yates are most hearty. Who needs lunch? Most important, though, is the conversation, your chance to catch up with committee members and the Bush Crew.

### Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker for the August meeting is Ron Lewis. Ron will be speaking on the subject of "Native Fish" As is usual, the meeting will commence with the guest speaker and our AGM will commence following a short break.

### Friends of Damper Creek Annual General Meeting

Our August meeting is, as usual, our Annual General Meeting. All offices will be declared vacant and are open for nominations. Nomination forms are available from the website [www.vicnet.net.au/~damper](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~damper) and the

formalities (nominators and seconders) can be organised on the night.

### Friends of Damper Creek Important dates to remember:

	August	Notes
Meeting:	Wed 24th - 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
W-Bee	Sun 28th 10-00am to 12-30pm	Middle Bridge
	September	
Meeting:	Wed 28th- 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
W-Bee	Sun October 2nd 10-00am to 12-30 pm	To be advised

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Damper Creek Reserve Inc is a member of 'Landcare' and 'Land for Wildlife' Volunteer Nature Conservation.

***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 2011

