

Damper Creek Doings May 2019

The newsletter of the FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC

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Two Important Events in May

This month the Friends will be having two important events and we invite you to put into your diaries:

“Gardens for Wildlife” Workshop 7.30pm Wednesday 22 May 2019

The Guest Speaker for our May meeting will be a talk and workshop on “**Gardens for Wildlife**”, presented by Anna Mezzetti, program coordinator with the City of Monash, assisted by Daniel from the Monash Council Bushcrew. A free Council booklet and a voucher for free tube stock will be available to attendees who are interested in engaging in the program. One of the plants in the booklet suggested for the Monash area is the “*Silver Banksia Marginata*” – see profile below

If you, like us, are concerned about the continuing loss of vegetation and trees in the City of Monash, individual households can help counter this by planting out more in their own gardens, to attract birds, butterflies, bees and fauna who need this valuable food source.

Community Planting Day 10.00am -12.30pm Sunday 26 May 2019

The Melbourne Water funded **Community Planting Day** will commence at 10am at the rear of the Park Road houses (up-hill, west of the main pond in Damper Creek). The registration table will be at the entry to the Reserve in Park Road. We have up to 3000 tube stock to plant so we are hoping for a strong turn up. Family groups will be especially welcome. A free sausage sizzle (BBQ trailer will be set up in the Park Road carpark) will commence from approx. 11am. All Welcome. For more details see below.

31 Bengal Crescent update - and Vegetation Protection

An extensive amount of time and effort (and angst) has been dedicated to discussions and meetings with Council staff over what the Friends and many in the wider community feel is an inappropriate development and out of character with the surrounding area being a property abutting Damper Creek Reserve (NRZ2 Creek Abuttal zone). The Friends were hoping for an outcome that reinforced the new zoning requirements outlined in the recently gazetted Amendment C125 (site coverage restrictions and greater setbacks). It was hoped also that greater scope for planting canopy trees to complement the Reserve would be part of this new remit.

The site has been cleared of vegetation ('moonscaped') and a huge 60 square house has been approved by Council (including variations to the rear set-back and site coverage, as reported in last month's newsletter). The construction of the massive building is now well advanced. The Council's Municipal Surveyor has now confirmed that the height, setbacks, site coverage and permeability are all within the requirements approved by Council.

As we saw this as a “test case” for implementing the new C125 NRZ2 requirements in the Damper Creek area, it is a disappointing outcome, especially given our concerns that other similar developments around the Reserve may happen in the future.

In order to protect the treed environment surrounding the Reserve, it will be necessary to become more active in influencing Councillors, some of whom are not sympathetic to stricter vegetation protection controls.

We need to voice our concerns regarding current Monash Planning Scheme regulations which seem insufficient to prevent extensive tree removal and overdevelopment. Council planning staff are currently working on ways to implement the **Monash Urban Landscape Character and Canopy Vegetation Strategy**, including the possible use of stronger landscape design and vegetation protection **Overlays**. We see this Strategy as the best hope for the future, so that legally enforceable environmental protections are put in place for Creek Abuttal and Creek Environs zones. Environmental Overlays are successfully applied in other surrounding municipalities. This matter is likely to come up for discussion at a Council Meeting in the near future. We would like to see a strong attendance by the Friends at the meeting: we will keep you informed.

It is crucial that this Strategy be signed off at Council to proceed to the Minister for approval, gazettal and inclusion in the Monash Planning Scheme as soon as possible. The Friends need your help and engagement on this important matter as your comments and feedback to the Monash City Council are so very important.

If you too are feeling quite alarmed at the rapid rate of loss of trees and vegetation in our area, please continue to be actively engaged and send a letter or an email to the CEO and Councillors of Monash City Council - either address a letter to Monash City Council, Civic Centre PO Box 1, Glen Waverley 3150 or - email – mail@monash.vic.gov.au

All you need to do is to write a few words expressing your dismay at the continuing rapid loss of trees and vegetation in the City of Monash through over-development. **Your individual voice is important.** Please write and be heard! Monash leaf and tree coverage in 2015 was measured at 22%. That was 4 years ago and each week we see blocks of land being “moonscaped”. That percentage figure would have, to our dismay, decreased rapidly since then. Council has a stated goal of achieving 30% coverage in the future: if that is to be achieved stronger controls are needed.

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A note about cats

Did you know? - Cats are prohibited from entering Damper Creek Reserve!

If you have a beloved cat, for its health and safety, please keep it inside and/or in a secure run outside. Cats are cuddly, companionable and cute but they are also efficient hunters and killers of wildlife, they can get hit by cars, be injured or injure other animals and spread diseases.

Did you know? -That Monash City Council will introduce a cat curfew in 2020? - For more information, phone Monash City Council Animal Management 9518 3555

Meetings and Working Bees 2019

Next meeting - Wednesday 22 May "Gardens for Wildlife" workshop - see above for details

Next working bee - Sunday 26 May – Community planting day – Melbourne Water project grant – registration at the Park Rd entrance to the Reserve.

Following a severe storm and the disastrous loss of a large tree at the rear of 24 Park road last year, (and several other large trees damaged or uprooted nearby) the Monash Bushcrew have been working to rehabilitate the area. The huge stump and several large logs have been placed in a nearby planting area. The area adjacent to the property boundaries has been levelled to facilitate mowing. The stump and logs will make a significant feature as well as providing great habitat. Mulch was spread in that area during the April working bee ready for tube stock plantings in May. Many thanks to all the volunteers who came along to spread the mulch – a job well done!

Melbourne Water donated \$100 to the Friends (at our Jubilee celebrations September 2018) and this will be used to purchase a council supplied advanced tree. The tree, to be planted on the Community Planting Day, will be an indigenous *Eucalyptus melliodora*, semi mature, (similar to those planted around the playground). We extend our sincere thanks to Melbourne Water.

July guest speaker - On Wednesday July 24th we will be hosting an excellent speaker Dr Lindy Lumsden from the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research. Her topic will be "Bats, Fascinating Creatures of the Night". Dr Lumsden is an honorary life member of the Australasian Bat Society. The Northern free-tailed bat - *Ozimops lumsdenae* - was named after her.

September guest speaker - On Wednesday 25th September Lucas Skelton, Manager Horticulture, at Monash City Council will be our guest speaker. Lucas will share information about their new "Green Shoots" programme focussing on community education on plants and gardening. This will complement their "Gardens for Wildlife" program shared with you in May.

Note for working bees: Please help the environment and the Friend's group by bringing your own water bottles and coffee/tea cups to working bees. We will fill them up for free!

Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) • 1-10m high. • Striking feature tree or excellent screening plant. • Well-drained local soils, but tolerates being wet in winter and dry in summer. • Grows in full to part sun. • Striking bright yellow flower spikes from September to April. • Attracts butterflies, mammals, parrots and honeyeaters. (Text source: "Gardens for Wildlife" booklet, Page 44 – Picture below of immature and mature silver banksia – Source: Wikipedia)

Silver banksia (*Banksia marginata*)



Content of this newsletter is the responsibility of the Friends of Damper Creek Reserve Inc.