



Ponderings

Seasonal newsletter of the
Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek

Winter 2024 Issue 83

advocate educate interpret participate rehabilitate revegetate

Welcome to the winter edition of 'Ponderings'. We hope you find items of interest to all who care about our wonderful Moonee Ponds Creek. As a group we are still feeling the loss of our former editor, David Widdowson, greatly. I thank those who have contributed to this Winter edition: The Honourable Kelvin Thomson, Kaye Oddie, Rachel Lopes, Charlotte Napper, Melissa Doherty, Anna Lanigan and Maurice Austin. I hope to see as many members as possible at our next meeting on June 17th at Sam Merrifield Library, Moonee Ponds.

John Kavanagh

**President of Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc.
and Acting Editor of 'Ponderings'**

(If anyone would like to enquire about being editor of 'Ponderings' it would be gratefully received.)

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

Help protect and enhance the Moonee Ponds Creek's natural environment. For information and to join, go to mooneepondscreek.org.au and complete the membership form, or write to PO Box 1092, Moonee Ponds.

First Nations Cultural Training

Chain of Ponds Governance Group members and friends attended Cultural Safety training on 1 May with Aunty Kym Monahan, Greater Western Water’s First Nations Advisor. A wonderful session, and an important priority to continue our learning journey. Also, great timing as we prepare to welcome Wurundjeri Elders to our next Governance Group meeting (June) and we hope, the beginning of a long-standing connection. Planning and design of the Cultural Immersive Trail (new name coming) is well underway with Wurundjeri Elders guiding the way. This project is due to be completed at the same time as the Reimagining Moonee Ponds Creek project and we’re thinking we’ll need a big party in Spring to celebrate them both. Thanks to Troy Pederson for helping build these connections with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage and Aboriginal Corporation.

Litter – Arti Project

Neil Sutton continues to weave his magic with litter, this time also with Chain of Ponds Governance Group member and artist, Catherine van Wilgenburg, and the kids at Westbreen Primary School.

Neil tells us: “**Week 4** of the project kicked off this morning and as ever the kids were passionate to get their hands on the (washed) litter to use their creativity to express their ideas on litter and waterways in the form of small sculptures. Each grade 5/6 class (of which there are four involved in the program) have been very keen from the start, and already know so much about plastic pollution and the impact on wildlife.

Prior to today’s session, the kids learnt about local litter sources, how litter moves from streets to waterways, the impact of litter on local wildlife and the cultural lens of caring for country. We have cleaned up the school and the local streets and the creek during separate out of school sessions, and now we are focussing on taking what we have learnt to create artwork in the class, that will build awareness around the litter problem on Pascoe Street, in Pascoe Vale, which is connected to Westbreen Creek via a short stormwater drain. With 6 more sessions to go, the program will end with a PICKUP PARTY at the school where all the artwork will be displayed. The final large Litter-arti sculpture will be displayed in the school initially, then hopefully in the local shopping strip and potentially as part of a Litter-art exhibition in the Incinerator Gallery. Watch this space.”



Visit From OzWater’24

Delegates from **OzWater’24**, toured the Reimagining Moonee Ponds Creek site on 3 May and were very impressed! It was a team effort to bring the tour about and thanks go to Greater Western Water, Melbourne Water and Alex Lee at Spiire for supporting the tour and chatting to interested delegates on the day.



Gardens for Wildlife

When evaluating the Gardens for Wildlife program in Hume City, all of the respondents (26 people from 40 program participants in Rounds 1 and 2) were very satisfied with their garden visit and report. Most people said they learnt a lot about wildlife habitat gardening. Many had also taken simple actions to create more habitat, such as planting indigenous seedlings, removing environmental weeds, or installing a bird bath, lizard lounge or bee hotel. Some even said the program was life changing, having become volunteer Garden Guides themselves.

Participants of Gardens for Wildlife receive a small gift bag, detailed garden visit report, and become eligible to collect some free indigenous seedlings. There is no cost to get involved and places are limited.

If you a resident in Hume City Council, you can apply for a garden visit at

https://hume.smartygrants.com.au/G4W2024_R4



Greenvale School Holidays Planting

Monday 8 July, 10am to 19m

Greenvale Recreation Reserve, 115 Section Road, Greenvale

Families and corporate volunteers are welcome to help plant out a buffer between the car park and adjacent nature conservation reserve at Greenvale Recreation Reserve. The plants selected will provide food host plants for the caterpillars of native butterflies. Pizzas will be ordered for lunch, and fruit snacks and other light refreshments provided. All the tools, gloves and planting materials will also be supplied.

Please register at <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/greenvale-school-holidays-planting-tickets-877783884227>

John St Oak Park

The landscaping works at 2a John Street Oak Park are almost complete. Council purchased the property at John Street in 2021 and has now converted the property to open space. A new path connection to the creek trail has been included and a labyrinth, providing a place for rest and reflection amongst the creek surrounds. The site also includes a drink fountain, seating, nature play and a lawn area.

A community planting day will take place on site on Saturday August 10th between 10 a.m. and 12 noon.



Gardens for Wildlife



Gardens for Wildlife is now up and running in Merri-bek. The program offers residents a garden assessment visit and report containing advice on enhancing the habitat value of their property from our volunteer Garden Guides. Whether you have a large backyard, or a few pots on the balcony there is lots you can do to support wildlife. Every garden can act as a steppingstone building links between our creeks and reserves. There is also a new Gardens for Wildlife Gardening Guide out. Hard copies will be available at Merri-bek Libraries, or view on our website. This resource includes information on local flora and fauna, and advice on how gardeners at home can include habitat friendly elements into their garden to welcome the wildlife in. Find the new garden guide or learn more about the program at merri-bek.vic.gov.au/gardens-for-wildlife.

Nest Boxes along the Moonee Ponds Creek

New homes for furred and feathered friends are being created at three reserves along our creeks with a new nest box program. Nest boxes designed for small parrots, pardalotes and microbats are being installed in trees at Fran Street Reserve in Glenroy and J P Fawcner Reserve on the Moonee Ponds Creek, and K W Joyce Reserve in Pascoe Vale on the Westbreen Creek. These reserves offer good conditions for red-rumped parrots, pardalotes and microbats, but have a relatively young tree population. In the absence of natural hollows formed in old trees, artificial nest boxes can provide supplementary habitat for some hollow-bearing species. The program has also provided training in habitat management of trees for council arborists, and will include regular monitoring inspections to record who moves in. Funding for this project was allocated through the Merri-bek Community Budget Ideas process, where community can submit and vote in support of project ideas to be funded.



Outlook Drive, Glenroy Ecological Burn

Earlier this month we were able to carry out an ecological burn at the reserve which contains remnant vegetation. The burn will help with weed control and improve the health and vigour of the vegetation. The area represents an original escarpment of native vegetation along the lower section of the Moonee Ponds Creek. The works will be followed up with some infill planting in the coming months.

Reimagining Moonee Ponds Creek Project Update

January 2023 to February 2024 - in channel rockwork

After some delays caused by wet weather and high flows in the creek in January 2024, the in-stream channel rockwork is now complete. It was a slow and meticulous process to place the rocks in such a way to make it look as 'natural' as possible.



May 2023 to July 2024 - Revegetation of creek channel banks

The planting of more than 43,000 native trees, grasses and shrubs will be completed in a staged manner. While some have been planted, most of the revegetation will be done after the hot summer months to ensure we give the plants their best chance of survival.

Almost 200 aquatic plants on the bottom of the creek channel in December 2023.

Planting 7,000 native plants started in April on the southern side of the creek (Moonee Valley Council side). Revegetation will continue through to July 2024.

June-July 2024 (during school holidays) - Construction of new bridge

Due to delays with the design, the bridge will now be built in the school holidays after Term 2 from late June to mid July 2024.

March 2024 to August 2024 - Construction of Merri-bek shared paths

The shared path on the northern side of the creek will be one of the last activities to be completed, after the pond and terracing works are finished (~August 2024).

December 2023 to August 2024- Construction of pond, channel bank terracing, and new stairs

Works to put the 'pond' back into Moonee Ponds Creek are now in progress, along with works to create stepped terracing (like a natural amphitheatre) on the creek banks.

These works are happening on the Merri-bek Council side.



Construction of pond and terracing in progress.

What's In A Name?

by Kaye Oddie (Photos from Anna Lanigan)

The Tarnuk

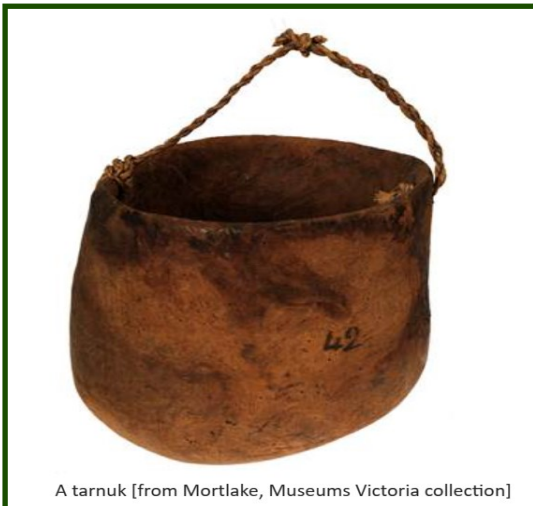
The Tarnuk is located in the upper part of the Moonee Ponds Creek at Westmeadows. It is a natural part of the Creek with surrounding grassy woodland. But how did it get its name? In Wurundjeri language, tarnuk, means a native bucket. According to the State Library (SLV) document – a transcription of the 1867 journal of William Thomas, assistant protector of Aborigines of Port Phillip, by Marguerita Stephens, published by the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages in 2014 – a tarnuk is a small Aboriginal pail for holding water, always carried by the Aboriginal women in going on a journey and filled at each creek crossing. A tarnuk is made from the elbow or burl found on old red, blue or white gum trees. And such old River Red Gums are found along the upper Moonee Ponds Creek. Local Gullum Willam Balluk tribe members would make tarnuks - water buckets and bowls - from the burls of the trees.

But it is the association with 'holding water' that gave rise to naming The Tarnuk at Westmeadows. The flattish land around the Creek here is a natural retarding basin for flood events. Water authorities called it the Wright Street Retarding Basin.

In 2006, a subcommittee of the Tullamarine Landfill Community Consultative Committee, funded by parent company Cleanaway, established a strategy to raise community awareness and appreciation of this unique but little known area. Extension of the shared path to Woodlands Historic Park and interpretative signage were part of the Strategy. And as part of this, early Creek crusader and member of the MPCCC (Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee), Bronwyn Riddell, suggested a less utilitarian name be given to this attractive section of the Creek - **The Tarnuk**.

In consultation with Wurundjeri members, the name was officially registered on the Victorian Geographic Place Names Register.

Some photos below illustrate The Tarnuk and a tarnuk.



A tarnuk [from Mortlake, Museums Victoria collection]



Grassy section of The Tarnuk



One of the many birds – a Spotted Pardalote



Kangaroo at The Tarnuk



Old River Red Gum tree

News from the Lower Section of Moonee Ponds Creek by Kaye Oddie

Governance Issues

The lower Moonee Ponds Creek encompasses the section from Kensington downstream through North and West Melbourne to its junction with the Yarra River at Docklands. It lies within the municipality of Melbourne but the Creek corridor is in multiple land ownership, management and responsibilities; multiple government jurisdictions and policies; overarching strategic plans, corporate interests; overlying transport issues.... It is impacted by large infrastructure such as City Link, rail and the West Gate Tunnel Project. But it also has areas of open space, the Capital City Trail shared path and plans to enhance open space in association with the Arden and Macaulay urban renewal areas.

It is this complexity that puts it into the too hard basket to get the multiple layers of government and corporate organisations to co-operate on implementing change. However the Melbourne City Council has recently approved an Advocacy Plan to try to address this. It seeks to integrate the multiple issues currently applicable to the lower Moonee Ponds Creek, collating background information, land owners/management, projects, lead agencies and current status. It seeks updates on the implementation, funding and timeframes for improvement projects and other planning issues.

Importantly, it calls for action on two priority matters:

- (1) for the State Government to approve and release the Moonee Ponds Creek Implementation Plan, which the Planning Minister has been sitting on for 3 years and
- (2) for the reinstatement of the Capital City Trail shared path to Docklands, that was cut off when the Docklands Studios was expanded.

The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek welcomes the Advocacy Plan and expresses its appreciation to Cr. Rohan Leppert, Lead of the Council's Environment portfolio and Deputy Lead of the Planning portfolio, for being the major proponent of the plan.

The detailed plan can be seen under Agenda, item 6.2 at the Council Committee meeting: <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/committees-meetings/meeting-archive/pages/future-melbourne-committee-19-march-2024.aspx>

Chelmsford St, Kensington, Draft Open Space Concept Plan

The City of Melbourne invites comment about a draft concept plan prepared for the former warehouse at 70-90 Chelmsford St, Kensington, which abuts the Moonee Ponds Creek. Go to <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/chelmsford-street-open-space>. Comment closes 17 June.

A preliminary concern with the draft plan is a proposed path at the top of the so-called Kensington Embankment on the Creek side, which would take out a third of the vegetated embankment, that the community has been planting and maintaining, with several Melbourne Water grants, since 2003! The draft plan will be discussed at the FoMPC meeting on 17 June.

Litter! Litter! Litter!

WAR ON PLASTIC – CROSS KEYS LITTER CLEAN UP

On Sunday 5 May Moonee Valley Sustainability organized a Litter Clean Up at Cross Keys Reserve. It was well attended and removed a significant amount of litter along the Moonee Ponds Creek in the vicinity of the Reserve. There have been a number of litter clean ups at the Cross Keys site since the Moonee Ponds Creek Litter Clean Up team was established, and the site appears to be improving. I think that the State Government initiatives last year of Container Deposit Legislation, and a ban on single use plastics, are helping.

Kelvin Thomson



... and On Sunday March 3rd the Annual **Clean Up Australia Day** took place and many events took place in close proximity to the Moonee Ponds Creek.

It was very satisfying to see so many community members taking part... **thank you** to all who took part and the following is a thank you from the team at Clean Up Australia Day.



THANK YOU AUSTRALIA!



Clean Up community, you are amazing! What a truly awesome week of action, culminating with Clean Up Australia Day last Sunday. We had over 10,000 Clean Up sites registered and more than 750,000 passionate volunteers from all walks of life, don their gloves and do their bit to make our environment a cleaner and better place! United we have made a real difference!

We have created a fun blog post on some highlights from the day, although there are so many more amazing stories out there!

We're blown away by all your Clean Up efforts and are looking forward to another year of improving and conserving our environment, eliminating litter and ending waste.

Olivia Chin and Her Community Arts Project

'Artist Olivia Chin invites young people aged 12 - 25 years to take part in two community arts workshops exploring the restoration and re-naturalisation of Moonee Ponds Creek through art.

Participants are encouraged to explore themes of connection and environmental stewardship, while creatively imagining the future of urban environments from their own perspective and experience.

Olivia is looking for passionate folks who might be interested in sharing their expert knowledge of the Creek with young people. You might have a special interest in bugs, birds or fish along the creek, take part in clean ups, or know a lot about local plants, and Olivia would love to hear from you!

She can be contacted at

oliviaclaire.chin@gmail.com

Using different creative mediums—including charcoal, chalk, paint, photography, and sound recording—participants are invited to contribute towards the making of a large-scale, collaborative banner, which will be exhibited in the *Body Field* exhibition from Saturday, 7 December 2024 to



Healthy Waterways Strategy Information Session

Wed 12 June, 2024, 1-2pm, hosted by Melbourne Water online

Register at waterway.strategy@melbournewater.com.au

Hear how the Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-2028 is tracking:

- Where has good progress been made?
- How are targets like stormwater and vegetation tracking?
- What impact does a changing climate have on waterways?
- Where are the priority areas for protecting and enhancing waterways?



Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc

PO Box 1092, Moonee Ponds, Victoria 3039

www.mooneepondscreek.org.au

friends@mooneepondscreek.org.au

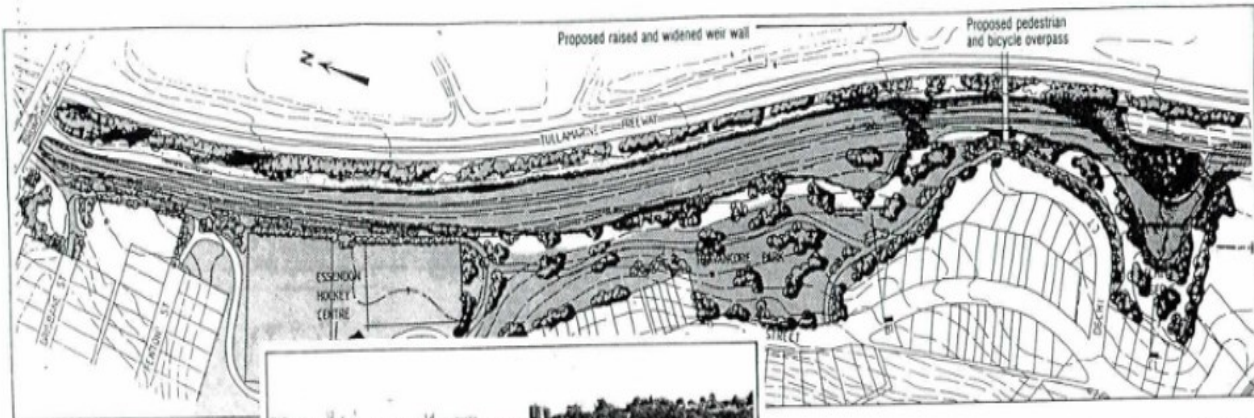
If you have any articles or photos you would like to submit for consideration for any future editions of 'Ponderings' please do so by emailing fompc.ponderings@gmail.com

From the Archives

(Not the easiest article to read but still incredibly interesting.)

2 THE AGE SATURDAY 28 DECEMBER 1991

Saving a city's lost creek



MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE

JOHN STEVENS



Tullamarine Freeway with its proposed riverbank park.

MELBOURNE

JOHN STEVENS

MR KELVIN THOMSON, the state Member for Pascoe Vale, says if the Berlin Wall can crumble overnight it ought to be possible to bust up the concrete lining of Moonee Ponds Creek.

Possible, yes, but very costly. There is, however, a simple but ingenious method under consideration to transform this eyesore at Melbourne's main visitor entry.

Next week Melbourne Water will begin building a low wall across the creek — or drain as it has now become — near the Tullamarine Freeway exit. This will create a shallow dam or pond submerging the concrete for several hundred metres.

The pond will be closely watched for a year to make sure the water does not become smelly, attract mosquitoes or gather silt or rubbish. If the trial is successful, the whole freeway section of the creek will be converted into a broad watercourse winding through grassy banks and trees, a gateway worthy of the Garden State.

Nor does the story end there. The freeway section is but stage one of a draft plan for the regeneration of virtually all the creek — 27 kilometres of it, from Docklands to Gellibrand Hill near Tullamarine. The object is to put the ponds back into Moonee Ponds Creek, to return the wasteland of the drainage system to bushland

and billabongs, bringing back animals, birds and frogs and improving public access to what would be a major area for passive recreation. It would take five to 10 years and cost about \$5 million.

And even more. Moonee Ponds Creek could be the pilot scheme for obliterating other blots on Melbourne's landscape. Gardiner's Creek, beside the South-eastern Freeway, is concrete-barrelled and so are Clayton South Creek, Mordialloc Creek, Elsternwick, sections of Darebin Creek and others. With Melbourne Water in the mood to atone for past sins, all could become beauty spots. Why not?

Barrel-draining is an example of the single-solution approach to planning. By straightening and consolidating a watercourse, engineers speed the flow of water, improve drainage efficiency, control flooding and reclaim land for other uses. But at what cost to the landscape? The practice has been abandoned except as a last resort.

Moonee Ponds Creek was originally a series of swamps and wetlands rather than a permanent continuous watercourse. It got the treatment in conjunction with the building of the freeway. As a boy, Mr Thomson used to play in a small meander at what was the swinging bridge at the bottom of

the Gaffney Street hill. "We used to go exploring and catch frogs," he recalls. "It was idyllic." Years later he came back to find what he describes as a truly horrible sight. The winding creek was straightened, concrete-lined with the big trees and overhanging vegetation removed.

When Mr Thomson called a public meeting in 1989 to discuss the creek's future, more than 50 people turned up, reflecting deep community sentiment. The meeting formed the Moonee Ponds Creek Association which is now a coordinating body for five municipal councils and three Government departments. Melbourne Water is managing the plan.

The creek renewal would upgrade much of the north-western suburbia and a big area of inner-urban industrial mess. The existing linear trail, including 20 kilometres of bicycle path, would be linked and extended. The mouth at Docklands would get an estuarine theme with the west bank an isolated natural reserve and the east open to the public. Upstream the creek would be deepened for canoeing and fishing.

The creek would be re-aligned between Mount Alexander and Racecourse roads to dramatically improve open space around the high-rise flats of Debnay's Park.

This would be made possible by the proposal to put the western bypass underground at this section.

Upstream from the freeway the plan is to reintroduce a more natural-looking course and to take out some of the artificial, angular bends. This would entail removing some concrete. At the harsh Bell Street interchange — Malfunction Junction as it is known — the proposal is to find some kind of artistic treatment of the three levels of

proposals contravened Government coastal policy, the panel recommended only slight modifications.

The Planning Minister, Mr McCutcheon, then called for a report from the Western Regional Planning Committee. The committee has recommended preserving the important view lines by pushing housing back an average distance of about 250 metres from the coast. This would reduce the development by about a third in area

Street interchange — Malfunction Junction as it is known — the proposal is to find some kind of artistic treatment of the three levels of concrete structure.

The creek runs through the biggest retarding basin in Melbourne — at Jacana — and past hundreds of back yards. Mr Bill Johnsen, senior project manager of Melbourne Water's waterways and parks division, hopes that over time residents will re-focus their houses and back yards to the creek and treat it as parkland to be embraced rather than a drain to be shut off.

Some land may be acquired along the way to improve banks. Mr Johnsen is hopeful of some sponsorship funding, particularly at the freeway section.

Possible road and rail works could be a problem, such as freeway widening. A freeway-creek route is one of four being considered for the proposed rapid transit from Spencer Street Station to Melbourne Airport. This will be resisted. The western bypass road, even if partially tunnelled, will be intrusive, particularly through the railyards between Arden Street and Dynon Road. The elevated road will add one more layer to what is described as the most visually chaotic part of the creek.

THE threat to the scenic grandeur of the Griffith Point headland, San Remo has eased.

A proposal to subdivide the 31-hectare hillside, which forms a double headland with Cape Woolamai, Phillip Island, was referred to an independent panel earlier in the year. Despite claims that the

ing housing back an average distance of about 250 metres from the coast. This would reduce the development by about a third in area and by 65 of its 240 housing lots. The committee adds that land between the coast and the housing should be vested in a public authority so that it can become a truly usable recreational asset.

The owner of the land and proposer of the scheme is Westport Pastoral Pty Ltd, the family firm of the shadow planning minister, Mr Rob Maclellan.

THE inscription on the Batman memorial in Batman Avenue ends rather mysteriously in the single word, "Circumspice". This puzzled Mr Lew Jenkins, a retired construction worker, who was unable to gain enlightenment from any dictionary or from those he consulted at the State Library. Finally Mr Jenkins wrote to Owis, the Oxford World and Language Service and received from Dr J. H. Marshall, the senior assistant editor of the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, this reply:

"The word circumspice is the imperative form of the Latin verb, circumspicere, 'to look around'. It is best known from its use in the epitaph on the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral which he designed: Si monumentum requiris circumspice. 'If you seek a monument, look around you.' The example to which you refer is apparently an oblique reference to this Latin motto; the implication is that Melbourne itself is the memorial to John Batman."

Sightings Along the Creek

Photos by Maurice Austin



In brief ...

HISTORY OF MOONEE PONDS CREEK TALK

On Thursday 2 May former Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek President Kelvin Thomson spoke at the Glenroy Community Hub on “The History of Moonee Ponds Creek and its Friends”. His talk was arranged by Merri-bek Libraries as part of National Trust Australian Heritage Month, which ran from 18 April till 18 May. The talk was well attended, and gave people who had grown up close to the creek a chance to reminisce about their own childhood experiences.

Kelvin also spoke about the history of the Moonee Ponds Creek, and its friends, at the Coburg Library last year. For anyone who missed these presentations, but is interested in the creek’s history, another opportunity is coming! The City of Moonee Valley has invited Kelvin to do a similar presentation.

It will most likely take place on September 19 at 6pm, at the Sam Merrifield Library. Full details will be provided when they are finalized.

MOONEE PONDS CREEK PROJECT A PRECEDENT?

Kelvin Thomson arranged, through Ben Davis of Friends of Edgar’s Creek, for an inspection of the naturalization works along our creek by Friends of Edgar’s Creek. This took place on Sunday 28 April at 2pm. The Friends of Edgar’s Creek saw, and heard about, the work that has been done in the Brosnan Crescent Strathmore North area.

The group then went to Ronald Street Coburg East, and inspected an area of Edgar’s Creek which was concrete lined in the 1980s. The Friends of Edgar’s Creek is likely to use the Moonee Ponds Creek example to press for action to address the concrete in Edgar’s Creek.

SHIPPING CONTAINER

It is with disappointment that we report that Moonee Valley Council has granted the Men’s Shed of Strathmore permission for a second shipping container on the Nursery Corner land in Strathmore. The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc., like many in our community, are fully supportive of the work of Men’s Shed’s around Australia, and particularly the excellent work of the Strathmore Men’s Shed. We are, however, disappointed that public open space adjacent to the Moonee Ponds Creek will be occupied by a second shipping container.

Upcoming Meetings of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc.

Date	Time	Venue and Purpose
Monday June 17th	6.30 p.m.	Sam Merrifield Library Meeting Room 3 General Meeting
Monday August 12 th	6.30 p.m.	Sam Merrifield Library Meeting Rooms 1&2 General Meeting
Monday October 14th	6.30 p.m.	Sam Merrifield Library Meeting Rooms 1&2 Annual General Meeting followed by General Meeting
Monday December 9 th	6.30 p.m.	Sam Merrifield Library Meeting Rooms 1&2 General Meeting

All members are very welcome!