

A Guide to the Artworks of the Moonee Ponds Creek

by the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, 2020



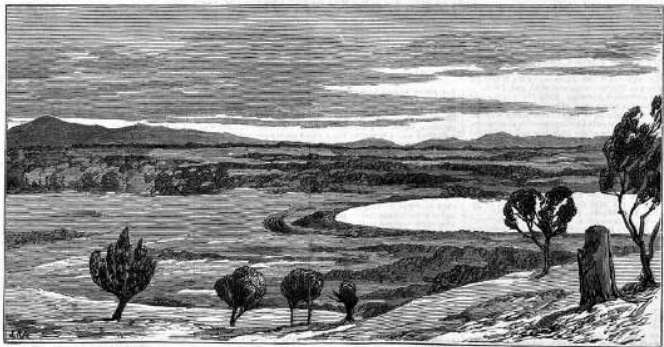
Introduction

This guide to Artworks along the Moonee Ponds Creek (along with accounts of art created with the Moonee Ponds Creek as its subject), was created as part of the Winter 2020 Edition of Ponderings, the digital newsletter of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek. The map on the next page shows where these works are located - many of them the result of the MPC Public Art Strategy, produced in 2000. Thanks to the artists Glenn Romanis, Debbie Qadri, Penny Algar and Joseph Griffiths for their assistance. David Widdowson, Editor

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Historic Art



VIEW FROM FLAGSTAFF HILL, WEST MELBOURNE, IN 1841

Etching of West Melbourne Swamp where Moonee Ponds creek finished. (Julian Ashton, 1881, SLV)



View of the Swamp from Batman's Hill in 1844 looking northwest, by Robert Russell, 1884 (SLV)

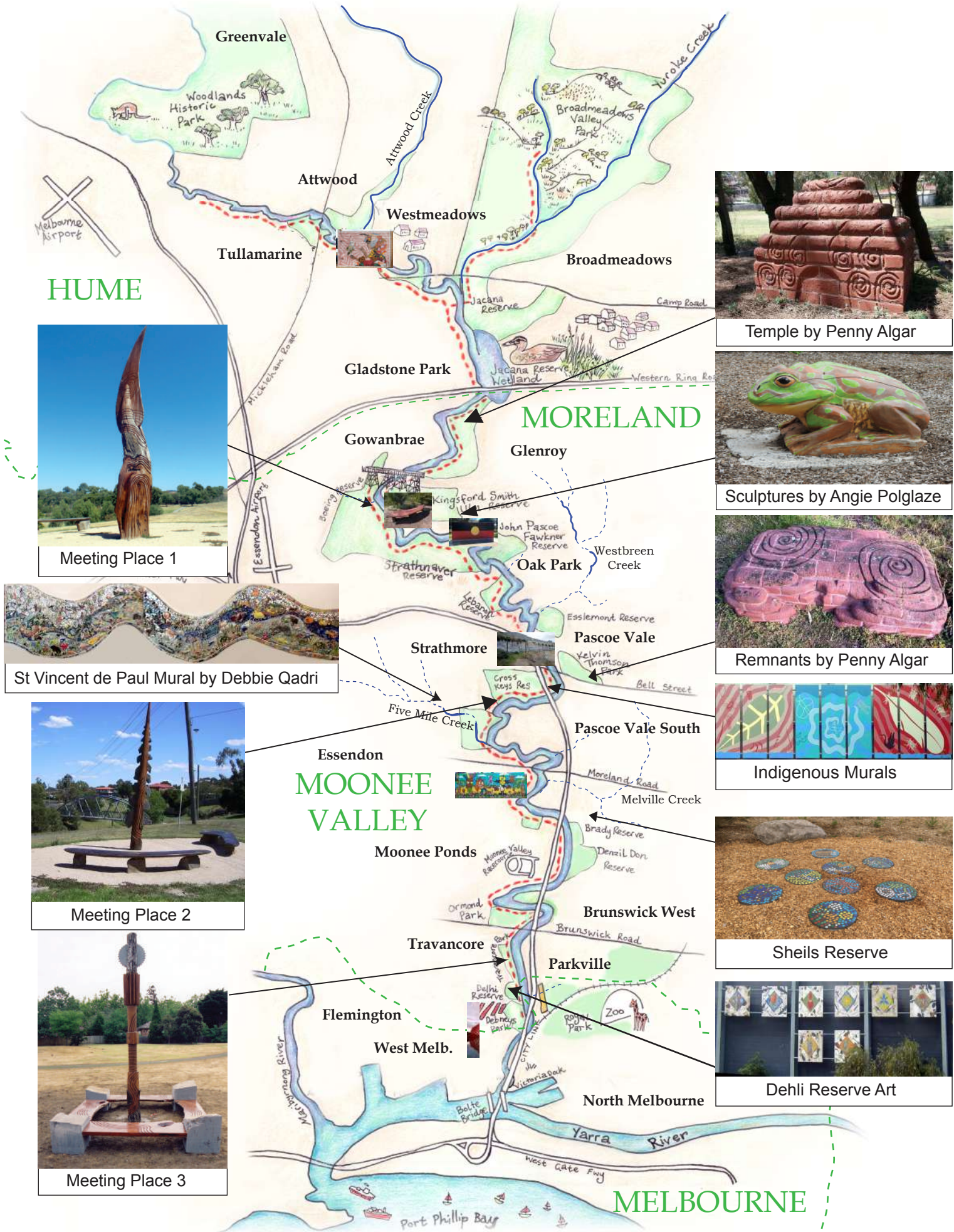


Surveyor General Robert Hoddle created these two watercolours of the creek around 1847. At left, Main's Bridge, Flemington Road (Moonee Valley City Council Art Collection), at right, Monee Monee Valley.



Another view of Main's Bridge, this 1851 drawing was done by clergyman William Jarrett (Mitchell Library).

Moonee Ponds Creek - Artwork Locations



Green dashed lines indicate municipal boundaries, Blue dashed lines indicate former tributaries. Red dashed line is the MPC Shared Trail. Original Map courtesy of Rachel Earea.

Meeting Place Sculptures

These three Sculptures/ Meeting Places were designed and created by Glenn Romanis, commissioned by the Moonee Valley Council. Both the vertical elements and seats have the lines of the Moonee Ponds Creek carved into them, representing the creek's many different vistas. The three meeting places represent how the creek has been used over many millennia:



The Boeing Reserve installation represents flora. River Red Gum was used, as it is one of the most iconic species found along the creek.



Travancore Park represents industry and the massive changes that have taken place along the creek over the last 200 years.



TS

The Cross Keys Reserve Meeting Place represents human occupation and how the waterway has been used as a food source and place of habitation for thousands of years.



DW

The River Red Gum seat at Boeing Reserve was created and inspired by the other works as another place to sit, rest and contemplate.

Thanks for Glenn Romanis for his assistance and the top two photos.

Mural at St Vincent de Paul Primary by Debbie Qadri

In early 2013, I worked with the students of St Vincent de Paul Primary School in Strathmore - and their Art teacher Frances Williams - to create a ceramic mural of the creek in the school hallway. As with most of my projects, the entire school was involved in creating the parts that made up the mural.



The students first created small clay artworks and tiles showing the flora and fauna that were once a feature of the creek. Over a number of sessions, preps created the rocks and grasses for the work, while higher grade students produced the birds, frogs, fish and other creatures.



The children learned about the history of the creek as they made the mural, discovering the animals and plants that featured when the Wurundjeri People lived there, and how many of these indigenous creatures have disappeared because of the agricultural and urban development of the creek. The children also learnt about how the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek and councils are regrowing the plants and grasses once native to the region.



After all the small works were created, under-glazed, fired, clear glazed and then fired again, I used them to create the mosaic, sticking them onto specially cut panels of cement sheeting which had been bolted to the wall. The students' clay artworks were mosaiced with tiles and the cracks filled with grout. The tiles around the border of the mural had native plants pressed into them, with the names of native flora written on them.



The mural is a permanent reminder to students of the animals and plants that belong to the creek and how important it is to take care of them.

For more information on the mural, go to:
<http://mooneepondscreekmural.blogspot.com/>



Sculptures and Community Art by Penny Algar



“Temple” (1998, above and below)

Materials: Brick, Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*).
Location: Moonee Ponds Creek near Fran St, Glenroy.
Funded by Moreland Council’s “Art in Public Places” program, “Temple” is a circular space with four sculptures edged with indigenous Sheoak trees and with Kangaroo Grasses in the centre. I had in mind that it might provide a quiet resting place for cyclists and pedestrians along the shared Moonee Ponds Creek pathway. Sheoak trees also create their own acoustic environment in the wind.

Funded from Moreland Council’s Strategic Grant program, these works were designed in large part as a nature play space for children. The organic red brick forms also recollect imagined ancient archaeologies as well as referencing Moreland’s brickmaking industrial past. The work comprises three solid brick carved sculptural elements set amongst 3000 indigenous Tussock Grasses and a meandering granitic sand pathway.



“Remnants” (1998, below and at right)

Materials: Brick, Poa Grasses (*Poa labillardieri*)
Location: Kelvin Thomson Reserve, Pascoe Vale



“Dehli Reserve Public Gallery” (2002, below)

Mosaic, concrete paint stencils on large cement sheeting panels on sound barrier wall.
Moonee Valley Council managed the project with funding from Transurban. The aim of the project was to highlight through children’s art the beauty of the indigenous flora, which once would have grown along the creek. My collaborator, artist Melinda Venticich and I worked with three local schools. Children were engaged with all phases of the project including design, mosaic fabrication and stencil painting.



Chainsaw Sculptures

These wooden sculptures were carved by Angie Polglaze, also known as the "Chainsaw Chick", who was commissioned by Moreland Council to carve them. There are three works in the play space at Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve:



Tawny Frogmouths (front and back views) show two adults and three fledglings. Council also plan to place more Tawnys in Austin Reserve.



Growling Grass Frog



Eastern Long-necked Turtle (all photos by Nina).

Street Art/ Graffiti

There are many instances of Street Art and Graffiti along the creek - **decorative** or **illustrative** works take a serious amount of time to create, and come closest to traditional or pop art styles. Here are some examples:



Gordon St Essendon, by Dan @d.o.yy (image: Mandy Heane)



Left: Rubix art, since lost (image: Mancell Cornish)



Lucy Lucy Art, Westmeadows (image: Andrew Haysom)

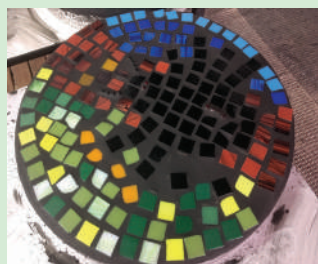
Tagging is the most common style of graffiti along the creek, most prominently on the wall under the Pascoe Vale Road exit off the Tullamarine Freeway:



Sheils Reserve Mosaics

by Wendy Skala, Landscape Architect, Moreland Council

In 2019 I facilitated a workshop with the kids of Dewdrops Early Learning Centre, who are situated at the end of Hope Street and often use Sheils Reserve for their Bush Kinder program. The children were asked to create a mosaic picture of something they would find in the park, with particular focus on insects, birds and plants.



The pavers were then installed in four locations around the park in areas designated as 'Pollination/Observation Pods' where you will also find a plinth that we will shortly be adding signage to, explaining some of the insects, plants and birds that the public may be able to observe from that location. We hope to connect them to an App, where people can record the creatures they see as part of an ongoing community science project and so we can track the behaviour of the birds and insects relative to the growth of the plants, old and new.



Indigenous Murals



These two works, "Indigenous Reflections of the Moonee Ponds Creek", were created by Artists Mandy Nicholson (Wurundjeri), Treaehna Hamm (Yorta Yorta) and Annette Sax (Taungurung). They were commissioned by CityLink to create artworks on the freeway sound wall and the bridge over the creek between Talbot Road, Strathmore and Wheeler Street, Pascoe Vale South. The images reflect and recognise the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation and the concepts of Country, Creation, Relationship and Connection, as well as the Past, Present and Future life of the Moonee Ponds Creek.



The connection to Country (land) is represented by the contour design surrounding the Moonee Ponds Creek (centre), and the Bogong Moth with two larvae (left). The Moonee Ponds Creek and the Bogong Moth were both important to the people of the Kulin Nation as a water and food source. The concept of Creation is captured through the image of a Wedge-tail Eagle's wing with Southern Cross (right). Bunjil, the Wedge-tail Eagle, is the Creator Spirit of the land, the people and their language.



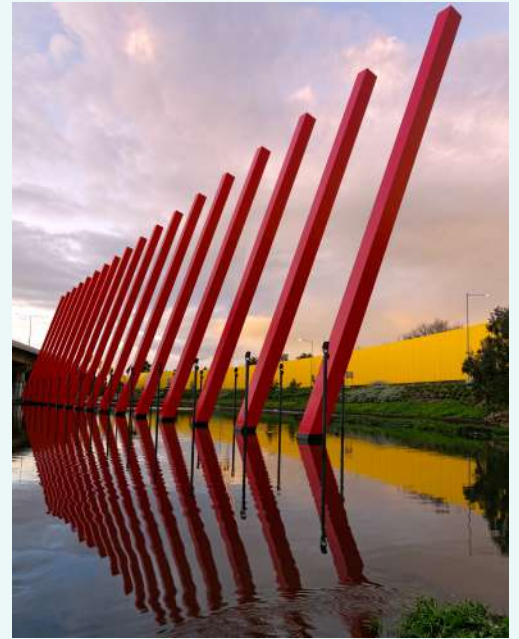
The two Sky panels (left and right) denote Relationship (symbolized by a cockatoo feather, left) and Connection (symbolised by the leaf, right) to the community of the creek, with the background spirals depicting the creek's Past. The Present and Future life of the creek are represented by the wavy spiral design at centre.

Source- "More than a Concrete Channel", by Bronwyn Riddell and Stella Blay. Images by Alex English.

Other Artworks of the Moonee Ponds Creek



Undersea Mural, Hope St Bridge, since lost to taggers



Melbourne International Gateway
Image by Andrew Haysom

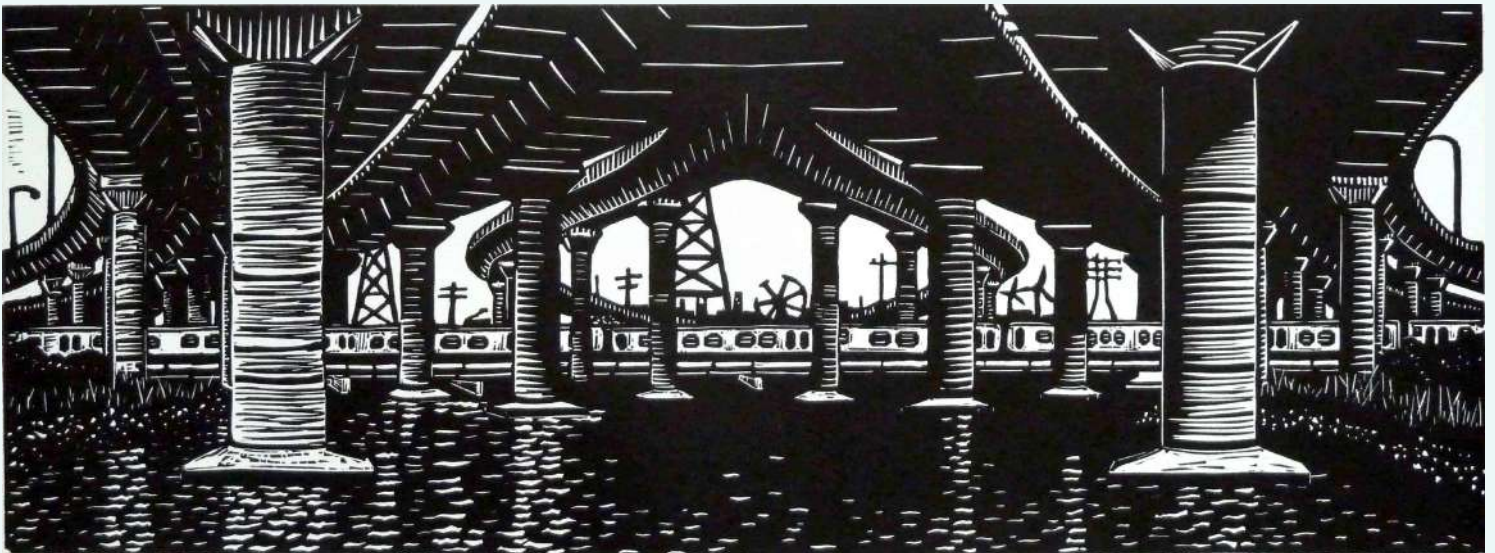


Mural near Bell Street by Strathmore SC students (also lost to taggers).



Aboriginal Flag Wall, Bryant Family Reserve, Oak Park

Artworks featuring the Creek (works are copyright of the Artists)



Many Rivers to Cross the Moonee Ponds Creek, by Larissa MacFarlane, linocut on rag paper, 59.5 x 37 cm.



Moonee Ponds Creek
Oil on canvas, 80cm x 80cm
by Mia Schoen



22° Moonee Ponds Creek
Oil on canvas,
by Chris Clements, 2018



Poor MPC, Mary Hammond 1998



City Link, Mary Hammond 1998

Fountains for Moonee Ponds Creek, 2017-18 by Joseph L Griffiths

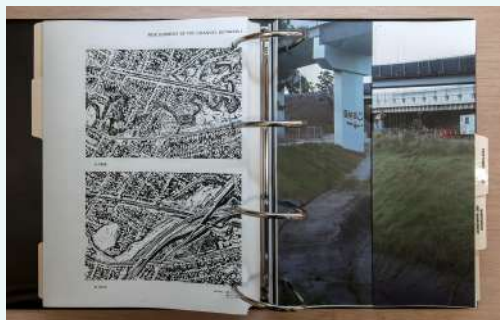


Materials : stormwater, portable fire-fighting pump, cloth hose, high-pressure nozzle, plastic flotation device, concrete blocks, steel trolley.

“Fountains for Moonee Ponds Creek” reimagines the creek’s heavily engineered form as a sculptural artefact, shaped by historical attitudes toward nature and the process of urbanisation. The project traces an attempt to transform a section of the creek under the freeway at Bell Street (“Malfunction Junction”) into a fountain. This sculptural gesture was articulated through a series of site interventions, video documentation, and a printed publication.



The intervention produces a moment of rupture through the collision of contrasting images – a fountain and a stormwater drain. The Moonee Ponds Creek is a complex site suspended between its engineered history; its multiple functions as a recreation arterial, drainage system and public amenity; the politics of its future development; and community initiatives to protect and restore its ecology.



The publication “Development of the Moonee Ponds Creek Drainage System” is an imagined facsimile of an unpublished survey by the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works, interleaved with images of the project and texts. Five copies were produced and will be circulated through library collections and one copy given to the FoMPC. Images: J L Griffiths.

Rubbish Serpent, Kensington 2013

RMIT landscape architecture students spent a day in November 2013 building an art installation at the creek in Kensington, filling milk crates with rubbish collected along the southern embankment, namely bottles, wrappers, books, paper and takeaway containers.

Kyle Bush, a student from Flemington, said their assignment was to research the creek and create a positive change to benefit the community. “(We created) a serpent emerging from the creek, choked up with rubbish and returning to the city that put it there in the first place,” Mr Bush said. Source: Herald Sun, images by Trojan Art & Tony Smith.

