advocate

educate,

interpret

participate

rehabilitate

revegetate

WaterWatch

...water testing galore on the Moonee Ponds Creek in Spring





complete citizen science activities on the Moonee Ponds (MP) Creek. These activities were delivered by Merri Creek Management Committee's WaterWatch Coordinator, Julia Cirillo. Schools in Merri-bek are welcome to book in these free sessions with Julia.

In mid September, over the course of 2 days, 125 Year 5/6 students from Brunswick North Primary School tested the water quality (WQ, also known as physical chemical water testing) of the Moonee Ponds Creek in Brunswick West (just below the Dewdrops Kindergarten).

The results showed a high salinity (from 1164-1480 EC), turbidity (water clarity) was excellent, nice and clear and the nutrient levels of phosphate were Fair. A pH of 9 was detected on one of the days, which is quite alkaline. All results have been added to the *WaterWatch data portal* as part of our historical data to record changes.

There was lots of concern about the WQ of the creek from students, with many recommendations for improving the water quality of the creek. As we were observing the creek and collecting water samples, we watched a cyclist passing just throw rubbish into the Moonee Ponds (MP) Creek. It is sad to see some of the community still treating the creek like their personal rubbish tip. On the up side, due to student interest, all the students from Brunswick North Primary School will be doing litter clean ups on the MP Creek in December to remove as much as the litter they can.

In mid October, over 2 days, around 100 Year 4 students from Strathmore North Primary School tested the water quality of the Moonee Ponds Creek, conveniently located next to their school, in Strathmore North. *continued over page* >



The students collected and tested water just at the end of the new area on the MP Creek where the concrete was removed. It was exciting for the students, staff and myself to get up close to the new area where large rocks and plants have been planted into the creek. As this section was not open to the public when we were there, we all felt special getting a sneak preview! On day 2, we noticed a whole lot of detergents coming into the creek, most likely coming through the stormwater system. Detergents can be toxic to aquatic life and remove oils from ducks feathers, meaning ducks protective barrier from cold and damp is removed.

The WQ results showed a very high salinity (over 2,000 EC on both days tested), turbidity (water clarity) was excellent, nice and clear and the nutrient levels of phosphate were low. A pH of between 8-8.4 was detected on both days. All results have been added to the *WaterWatch data portal* as part of our historical data to record changes.

Big thanks to the teachers from Strathmore North Primary School (Scott and Henry in particular) and the wonderful Emma Beale from Brunswick North Primary School for making these sessions possible for the students. I was impressed with students' questions and thought provoking discussions on the changes to Moonee Ponds Creek. If the decisions were up to these students, the MP Creek has a positive future.

Bucket loads of appreciation to the City of Merri-Bek and Melbourne Water for funding these free sessions (to the schools).

Julia Cirillo, WaterWatch Coordinator





DESTRUCTIVE WORKS BY JEMENA AT JOHN STREET RESERVE, OAK PARK

S mall community nature reserves, such as the John Street Reserve along the Moonee Ponds Creek at Oak Park can take many hands and many years to develop. We discovered this week that it takes less than an afternoon to destroy.

Without warning, on Tuesday 12 November, Jemena subcontractors dug up, moved landscaping rocks and piled over a garden bed, then removed plants and tossed them in a pile over other plants, before driving a heavy vehicle back and forth across the area. This was followed by more heavy vehicles on 15 November and further damage as an electricity pole was being replaced and secured.



A lot of people have been involved in the design, planting and ongoing maintenance of this little park over more than ten years with thanks to Merri-bek City Council, Melbourne Water, Friends of the Moonee Ponds Creek and local residents. Merri-bek most recently created an expanded local parklet on adjoining land, which had been purchased.

It is understood that power poles need replacement but surely some consultation with relevant agencies, such as Council, regarding minimising the impact of their actions is not too much to ask of Jemena.



As Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek life member Kaye Oddie said: "It's hard to believe Jemena as a public company interacting with community and residents and councils as part of its work could undertake such destruction of what is clearly a specially planted reserve. Where was the consultation with



residents, and councils, notices on site? Jemena - what poor corporate behaviour you have shown - environmentally and socially irresponsible!"

A complaint was made directly to Jemena CEO David Gillespie seeking clarity on what they plan to do to reinstate the garden. The response received from the Customer Resolutions Manager/ Customer Care Response, Steve Dooley, has shown little understanding of the problem for resolution, e.g., "replant the vegetation dug out and fix tyre marks," (by 25 November). Does he really believe the plants 'dug out' and thrown to one side will now regrow with a hot summer approaching?

Furthermore, it would seem that the Customer Resolutions Manager is not convinced yet that consultation is something Jemena should be doing in cases such as the John Street Reserve, when he wrote: "However, we may consider consultation in sensitive areas for future projects"... may?

And a later response from Jemena's Enquiries and Complaints Customer Specialist "that they will look into the damages" caused.

As Merri-bek's Natural Resource Management Officer, Vince Adreana, has pointed out, "I think he may have been given some poor advice on the replanting of existing vegetation" and "I will head down tomorrow and make some suggestions on how best to remediate the site."

Carolyn Layton

Postscript

Subsequent to the complaint, Jemena have offered a donation of \$1000 to the FoMPC and Merri-bek City Council to purchase plants and reinstate the Reserve's landscaping during next planting season (autumn '25).

Carolyn thanks Jemena for their response, and hopes they will, in future, respect the work done by local communities on sensitive habitat reserves at which Jemena carry out infrastructure maintenance.

THE TREEPROJECT - call for volunteers



he TreeProject is a volunteer, not-for-profit organisation that has been operating since 1989 to provide lowcost indigenous seedlings to landholders and Landcare groups. The aim is to help restore Victoria's soil, waterways, vegetation shelter belts and wildlife corridors by assisting revegetation projects. Millions of seedlings have been planted to date. Many plants grown by TreeProject volunteers have assisted in the restoration of bushfire affected areas.

For the coming 2025 year, the aim is to grow 150,000 indigenous plants. Volunteer growers are sought to each propagate and nurture around 300 seedlings, commencing early summer through to autumn. All materials, seeds, soil, instructions/training are provided.

If you would like to participate in the TreeProject's volunteer program, please go to the link: https://treeproject.org.au/grow-with-us/

To read more about the history and background of the TreeProject, see the recent article in Landcare magazine (Issue 88, Spring 2024):

https://www.landcarevic.org.au/landcare-magazine/ spring-2024/treeproject-from-backyard-seedlings-torural-revegetation/



Handy websites and Facebook links

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek/

Friends of Merri Creek:

friendsofmerricreek.org.au/

Friends of Edgars Creek:

foec.org.au

Friends of Steele Creek Facebook:

items will be safe and sound.

facebook.com/FriendsOfSteeleCreekInc

Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley:

fmvonline.com

Woodlands Historic Park:

whp.altervista.org/

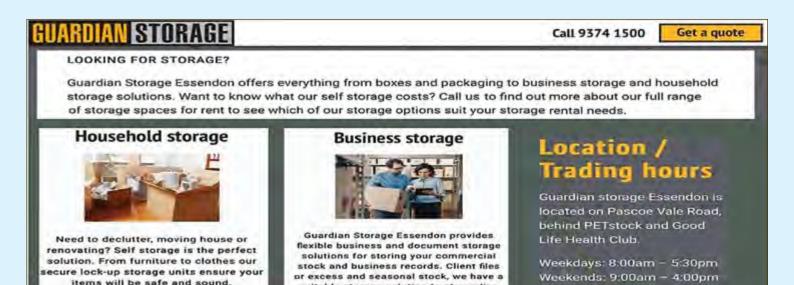
Victorian Indigenous Plants Co-op (VINC):

https://www.vinc.net.au

Chain of Ponds:

https://chainofponds.org

Contact us if you have any other links to share



or excess and seasonal stock, we have a

suitable storage solution to streamline your business and free up space

FRANK KINNERSLEY - Life Membership

rank Kinnersley, Vice President of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, was recently anointed with Life Membership of the organisation – an elevation that is justly deserved. Congratulations Frank!

Frank has a very long history of serving our community and his record is one of totally committing to whichever group he has belonged to. He is the dictionary definition of a 'Quiet Achiever' – he is always unassuming, humble and team orientated, but does the hard yards behind the scenes that are indispensable to the success of any volunteer organisation.



Before he joined the *Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek*, Frank was a significant participant, volunteer and organiser in Bicycle Victoria (now *Bicycle Network*) from the 1990s. Frank made himself available across the spectrum of Bicycle Victoria's riding events – rides in all Australian states and in New Zealand – organising luggage, transport, camp ground and food services, showers, entertainment and more. Frank often rode the entire ride, then on arrival at day's end, he would set about the support activities, working all hours of the day and night.

Coping with emergencies, such as bushfire evacuations, and dramatic weather events – he was in there 'doing the hard yards' helping the cyclists.

Frank was also involved in *Railtrails*, joining his cycling colleague Vince Aitkin, in organisational duties with this group. He was encouraged to join the National Committee of Management of Railtrails Australia, later becoming the Secretary, undertaking administrative roles and travelling and linking other railtrail committees and groups throughout Australia.



While this was all happening, in the early 2000s, Frank happened upon a planting group along the Moonee Ponds Creek, close to where he lives, and met Kelvin Thomson, member of the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee (MPCCC, a group supported by local Councils and community groups). And so it came to pass that Frank became involved with this group and its planting activities. Unfortunately, for various reasons, the MPCCC folded..., but Kelvin, Vince and Frank decided to work together to resurrect the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek group, which had mostly laid dormant whilst the MPCCC was active.



It is on the record that Frank, along with Kelvin as President and Vince as Treasurer, made extensive contributions in many roles and contexts over many years to the success and continuity of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek. For Frank, he was Secretary for 8 years, Vice President for 8 years, looking after the membership for 16 years and co-ordinator for 5 years of the mail-outs for 'Ponderings', with the latter three roles still ongoing! And he could always be relied on with any planting projects and events.

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Frank is a long-term member of the local Essendon Bush walking Club and was an early member of the Moonee BUG (Bicycle Users Group) and remains a member of several other Bicycle Users and Friends' groups. Frank represents the FoMPC and Moonee BUG on the Moonee Ponds Creek Chain of Ponds Collaboration.



Being an engineer by profession and having a lifetime of cycling experience, Frank is well qualified to provide input and to make suggestions that improve cyclists' safety and amenity and his views are sought by planners regarding cycleways and shared paths throughout Melbourne. He can be proud of improvements he has helped achieve to the shared paths along the Creek corridor.

Frank is a Life Member of Bicycle Network, Railtrails Australia, and now our Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek. Congratulations Frank! Your commitment to the Moonee Ponds Creek has been outstanding. Your invaluable, unselfish, voluminous work in the wider community has helped carry us to where we are today and shaped us for the challenges of the future.

Frank will be presented with his Life Membership Award at the 9 December meeting of the FoMPC.

Prepared by Vince Aitkin, John Kavanagh, Kaye Oddie, Kelvin Thomson

Postscript

Frank was to be presented with his Life Membership of the FoMPC at the December meeting – but an accident on his bike put a stop to that. Dogs off leash on the shared path near Boeing Reserve caused him to fall from his bike and

break his hip. Now with a new hip following surgery, he is recovering well in hospital... and planning exercise regimes for when he can be riding again in three months' time! We wish him well for his recovery.

MOONEE VALLEY COUNCIL

Update

Boeing Reserve Shared Path Proposal

Following concerns from the FoMPC and the Chain of Ponds Collaboration about the proposed shared path works at Boeing Reserve in Strathmore Heights and its impact on the Moonee Ponds Creek, Moonee Valley City Council Officers met with the FoMPC (John Kavanagh), Moonee BUG (Frank Kinnersley), Chain of Ponds Collaboration lead (Rachel Lopes), and Melbourne Water (Waterway officer) on 31 October. Anthony, Angus and David from Council's Engineering team, Kiran from Assets and Alex from City Design also joined. We walked the site and discussed: strategic cycling corridors, Boeing Reserve Master Plan, current path usage and preference of cyclists, the proposed shared path works, the planning scheme provisions for the creek and landscape, climate risks like flooding and creek erosion, the voice of the creek, vegetation impacts and habitat corridors, safety, organised sport plans, as well as the Austroads Standards for shared paths which determine path widths, off-sets and safety fencing. Alternative path alignment options including the various pros and cons were also discussed that could reduce the extent of fencing required including the possibility of realigning the path to the eastern Merri-bek side of the creek.

As a result of community concerns about the path fencing, the shared path works have been split into Stage 1 and Stage 2.

Stage 1 works involve 300m of path widening to 3m downstream of the Boeing Reserve bridge next to the baseball sports field and do not require any safety fencing. These works will follow the existing path alignment and proceed as scheduled.

Stage 2 path works north of the bridge are on hold pending a report to be presented to Council in early 2025 on the options.

If the Stage 2 path follows the existing alignment, then 550m of 1.2m high safety fencing will be required in between the path and the creek. As this is a safety requirement of Austroads standards (Part 6A) when the path is within 5 metres of a 2m drop for new paths, there is a need to explore alternatives such as alternative alignments and vegetation barriers for example, wherever possible. This safety requirement will apply to a considerable extent of the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail whenever path upgrades take place. While safety is paramount, this project has highlighted the challenge of navigating the often competing demands placed on the waterway especially where subdivision and other infrastructure has resulted in a narrow waterway corridor. Existing Melbourne Water Guidelines are often guided by flooding priorities or only apply in growth areas.

As a result, officers from Moonee Valley and Merri-bek City Councils are talking with Melbourne Water and the Department of Transport and Planning on how we can develop a more strategic and holistic approach through the Chain of Ponds Collaboration to ensure that we can continue to protect and enhance the significant natural and cultural heritage values of the waterway while still trying to support pedestrian and cycling use. It would also be a good time to restart the Trail, Transport and Connectivity Working Group of the Chain of Ponds and the earlier design guidelines. If you are interested in being involved or learning more, then please contact Alex English at: aenglish@mvcc.vic.gov.au

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Moonee Ponds Creek Trail looking south from the bridge at Boeing Reserve, Strathmore Heights (Stage 1)



Moonee Ponds Creek Bridge (Boeing Reserve Strathmore Heights to Deveraux St Oak Park)



Moonee Ponds Creek Trail looking north from the bridge (Stage 2)

Engagement with Strathmore Secondary College to bring some colour and life to the Bell Street Citylink underpass

Following a design studio engagement session with 100 students from Strathmore Secondary in July, Alex English had a chat with Rachel Lopes and Troy Pedersen from the Chain of Ponds Collaboration to explore the potential to improve the amenity and safety of the Bell Street and Citylink underpass area of the Moonee Ponds Creek behind the school. Almost half of the school's students use this space daily. Both the east and west banks of the creek are dominated by bleak and utilitarian concrete and service maintenance zones. There is little to no colour or vegetation and yet equally plenty of potential on this blank canvas. Students recommended the use of projected digital art, mural art, engaging and habitat plantings, safety improvements, lighting, engagement with Traditional Owner Heritage and some seating for the space.

Processes for implementing student proposals for the space

Troy met with the School's Year 9 Coordinator, Fotini, who is very excited to partner with the Chain of Ponds Collaboration and local Councils.

The aim of the project is to seek funding to engage an artist to work with students from Strathmore Secondary College to:

- Investigate digital art and sound projection companies that can project the students' work
- Discuss the project with Transurban, Department of Transport and Melbourne Water to see if they would be willing to partner/provide grant funding
- Review student proposals
- Seek permission from asset owners (Transurban-Citylink, VicTrack MTM, Melbourne Water and Councils) and guidance from project partners on what might be supported (Mural Art on bridge pylons)
- Seek access to power (Transurban)

- Check with Moonee Valley and Merri-Bek City Councils to see if they would support maintenance of any planting, seating and ongoing Mural Art assets
- Determine the best location to host the website and digital media (School or Chain of Ponds)

The location of this project is exciting because of its bleak brutalist and utilitarian nature (Kelvin refers to it as 'Malfunction Junction') but also the opportunity to improve it and strengthen the connection between the students and the creek. It will be important to include the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung perspective, that could potentially uniquely tie into the Cultural Immersive Trail 1km upstream. Through art, activation and science, this project aims to bring students, artists, Traditional Owners and agencies together to improve the amenity, safety and natural values of the Bell Street and CityLink underpass area of the Moonee Ponds Creek. We hope that this partnership project between Strathmore Secondary College students and the Chain of Ponds Collaboration will start to sow the seeds of change to an otherwise bleak and uninspiring section of the Moonee Ponds Creek into a desirable and engaging community space that is designed by, and speaks to, the local community.

Alex English



MERRI-BEK COUNCIL

Update

JP Fawkner Grassland Reserve

Since Early 2020 Merri-bek City Council with the expert help of Naturelinks have been working to transform an area of parkland dominated by Chilean Needle grass into a grassy woodland. The site is at John Pascoe Fawkner Reserve in Oak Park, along the creek beyond the sports fields.

The works have included direct seeding, burning, herbicide application, hand weeding along with many seasons of planting. We are starting to see the results!

The site has well established areas of Red Leg Grass, Silky Blue grass, Wallaby Grass, Spear Grass, Kangaroo Grass, Windmill Grass and Native Wheat Grass. Following planting last year, we have seen lots of wild flowers take off, such as Tufted Bluebell, Common Everlasting, Sticky Everlasting, Chocolate Lilies, Bulbine Lilies, Running Postman, Cut-Leaf Daisy, Native Flax Lily and many more.

We will continue to infill plant and improve habitat value in 2025 through the addition of more natural logs and rocks, whilst doing high quality weed control to protect and preserve all indigenous species, and to promote positive flora recruitment.

Nest boxes for microbats and parrots were also installed to this area earlier this year.

We are planning to host a walk and talk in the new year to give people an opportunity to visit the site.

Improving Harding-Munro Street

Consultation relating to strategies, plans and policies, sustainability and environment, traffic, parking and roads in Coburg is occurring on *coversations.merri-bek*.

Help us make changes to Harding-Munro Street in Central Coburg. Learn more about the project:

<u>conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/improving-harding-</u> munro-street



Clean Up Australia (CUA) have recently launched their campaign for Clean Up Australia Day 2025. Mark your calendar for Sunday 2 March, 2025 and join their BIGGEST EVER Clean Up!

This year is a special year for *Clean Up Australia* as they celebrate 35 years of Cleaning Up and helping to improve and conserve the Australian environment.

If you register to host a Clean Up Australia Day event before **31 December 2024**, you will automatically be entered into their Early Bird Competition, where three lucky winners will each receive a donated **\$1,000 Coles voucher**.

Go to Clean Up Australia's website to register: http://register.cleanup.org.au

CUA recently created a series of six 'How-To' Video. These videos cover key Clean Up topics and are designed to assist with each step of planning your own Clean Up event. The videos cover:

- Registering a Clean Up
- Leading a Clean Up
- What's in a Clean Up kit
- Preparing an End of Clean Up Report
- Disposing of Clean Up Rubbish
- Clean Ups for Schools

Go to Clean Up Australia's website to view: https://www.cleanup.org.au/faq-s

New *Capital City Trail* (CCT) shared path fence - Arden, Moonee Ponds Creek

The Melbourne Metro Tunnel project/ CYP contractors have recently installed new fencing alongside the Capital City Trail (CCT) shared path beside the Moonee Ponds Creek at Arden, North Melbourne. The fence and associated plantings are part of the new Intake Substation (ISS) for the Metro Tunnel.

Before everyone goes – yikes! Purple! The colour is that of the low-growing purple Rounded Noon Flower (Disphyma crassifolium) that grew along the banks of the creek and the historic Blue Lagoon, later known as the West Melbourne Swamp. So, it will be good when the Purple Noon Flower plants grow and come into bloom to match the fence and regenerate the creekside!

Kaye Oddie



CHAIN OF PONDS

Update

Re-imagining Your Moonee Ponds Creek

Transforming Moonee Ponds Creek into a more natural looking waterway and enjoyable community space.

Melbourne Water is leading the delivery of the project on behalf of the Chain of Ponds Collaboration Group, and in partnership with Merri-bek City Council, Moonee Valley City Council, Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action (DEECA), and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

Project update – what's the latest?

Works are progressing well with completion of:

- Channel rock work within the waterway
- Stepping stones across the creek
- Almost half of the revegetation along the banks and landscaped areas
- Concrete shared paths on the Moonee Valley City Council side of the creek
- Landscaping and gravel walking path on the Moonee Valley City Council side of creek
- Seating and viewing platforms on the Moonee Valley
 City Council side of creek. continued over page >

Upcoming works

The below works are scheduled over the next few months, with completion of Stage 1 in November 2024, weather permitting:

- Shared path safety fencing and path markings to guide pedestrians and cyclists on the Moonee Valley City Council side of the creek
- Continued construction of pond, channel bank terracing and stairs
- Construction of shared path on the Merri-bek
 City Council side of the creek completion end of
 September 2024
- Completion of revegetation on both sides of the creek.

The works will be carried out between 7am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in accordance with EPA guidelines.

Cultural Immersive Trail

Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation with the Chain of Pond Collaboration is creating an experiential trail along the creek. The trail will acknowledge and pay respect to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Moonee Ponds Creek and share stories of their cultural and spiritual connection to Country.

Design is underway with Kelp Creative and construction is expected to be completed by November 2024. The trail is supported by the Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action (DEECA) through the Port Phillip Bay Fund.



New Pedestrian Bridge

The bridge at Margaret Street is now installed.

• Pedestrian detours will be in place at both ends of the bridge.

Signed detours and traffic controllers will guide users around the work area.

To keep up to date on this project, please scan the QR code and subscribe to the e-newsletter.





Sightings

around the creek



Photos taken by $\boldsymbol{Maurice\ Austin}$ and reproduced with permission





oonee Valley City Council is committed to creating a connected city of accessible, active and sustainable transport choices, as outlined in our long-term strategy, MV2040. The council is consulting with community about plans to increase safety of the shared path along the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail, in the vicinity of Strathmore Secondary College.

The project seeks community feedback on the following design improvements:

- Reconstruction and widening of the existing shared path approaching the railway underpass
- A raised and widened boardwalk structure at the railway underpass
- Earthworks and retaining walls to improve sightlines for cyclists

- Bicycle safety barrier fencing adjacent to the steep drop-off to Moonee Ponds Creek
- New signage and line-marking for enhanced cyclist safety
- Landscaping and re-vegetation of affected areas.

They're keen to hear from community members who use the path, or who have a general interest in safety improvements to shared use paths.

This consultation will close on 5 January 2025.

See the detailed design concept plans for further insight into the design on the MVCC Yoursay page.

Have your say today!



Last minute cancellations and changes will be posted to our Facebook page.



Date/Time	What	Where
Monday 17 February	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek	Sam Merrifield Library,
6:30pm	General meeting	762 Mt. Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds.
Tuesday 22 April	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek	Sam Merrifield Library,
6.30pm	General meeting	762 Mt. Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds.
Monday 16 June	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek	Sam Merrifield Library,
6:30pm	General meeting	762 Mt. Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds.
Monday 18 August	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek	Sam Merrifield Library,
6:30pm	General meeting	762 Mt. Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds.

FOR ALL MEMBERS WHO ATTEND SCHEDULED PLANTING DAYS, PLEASE BRING GLOVES AND DRINKING WATER, WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR. ALL CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek supports child safe environments for its activities.

Last minute cancellations and changes will be posted to our Facebook: facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneepondscreek/

HUME, MERRI-BEK AND MOONEE VALLEY CITY COUNCILS SOMETIMES PLACE PLANTING DAYS ON THEIR WEBSITE. THEY MAY PREFER YOU TO REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE TO ASSIST WITH RESOURCING AND CATERING.

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, Victoria 3039.