



Ponderings

SEASONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
FRIENDS OF MOONEE PONDS CREEK

AUTUMN 2025 | ISSUE 86

advocate educate interpret participate rehabilitate revegetate

Kelvin Thomson has been appointed Litter Action Officer for the Chain of Ponds Collaboration.

Rachel Lopes, Chain of Ponds Collaboration Lead, has announced that the Honourable Kelvin Thomson is joining the Collaboration as *Litter Lead*, replacing Ho Ching (Serena) Mui, who has moved across to Melbourne Airport. She said: "Kelvin's wealth of experience (Federal and State Parliament from 1988-2016) and his time (30 years) at the helm of Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek means we are very, very blessed! After less than a handful of conversations, I have already learnt so much".

Kelvin said "I am pleased to be following in the footsteps of Neil Sutton and Ho Ching Mui, and looking forward to this opportunity. Litter matters to the environment, and it matters to people. Littered areas often reduce residents' pride in their community and contributes to the feeling of hopelessness and frustration. Tackling litter, on the other hand, improves community pride and fosters a sense of shared responsibility and belonging. There are many great groups and people who have worked on this problem for years.

I am particularly interested in hearing from people or groups who would be willing to take on responsibility for cleaning up 'their' section of the creek, and keeping it clean, and discussing how I can help you do that. Together, we're gonna clean up this creek!"

Kelvin can be contacted at: KelvinT@hume.vic.gov.au





FRIENDS OF MOONEE PONDS CREEK

Update

Nina Francechi Eason Heads for the Hills

Nina and husband Bob are leaving Strathmore and making a treechange to Castlemaine. We wish them all the very best.

Nina has been a Friend of Moonee Ponds Creek for a long, LONG time forming a group known as the Strath-Oak Planters, some thirty-odd years ago. This group's focus was the Creek alongside Brosnan Crescent in Strathmore now the site of the *Reimagining the Moonee Ponds Creek* naturalisation project. A fitting end to her association with Moonee Ponds Creek as Nina did see the start of the concrete being covered after all.



Nina and Millie. What a Team!



Nina with Danny.

Nina has always lobbied hard for issues and was never afraid to take the issues to Council Officers, the Mayor and Councilors along with State and Federal Members. She is always ready to send emails, make presentations to Council and arranging site visits. If we were to pick a few issues Nina tackled, the first would surely be Nursery Corner – a large open space along the Creek down from Mascoma Street. Nina and I (Anna) had quite a battle on our hands but won out, removing the aggressive tenant and paving the way for the rejuvenation of this lovely section along the Creek.

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Another issue Nina engaged with is the Split Soccer Club, the occupants of Strathnaver Reserve. From the potential imposition of massive advertising signs, to trashing the Mascoma Street verge, Split was an environmental nightmare.

Another notable battle was won after plans for a car park were eventually rejected, and protective bollards were placed along the roadside along with the proposed car park planted out. It now looks much better. Nina's best win was the continuation of the bollards down to the Strathmore North Primary School and lovely native plantings going in along there too. Next time you drive past say 'thanks Nina'.

Nina's artistic skills came to light in her stint as co-editor of the Creek newsletter *Ponderings* for thirteen issues (No's 46-58). Her ability to create great looking pages from collated articles drew much praise from readers. Nina also set up the Moonee Ponds Creek Facebook page and I'm sure she will continue to follow our fortunes from her new home. Nina so much more we could say!

She leaves us to continue with the current work-in-progress – the shared path environs Boeing Reserve – siting and fencing.

Wishing you all the best on your next exciting adventure. Castlemaine – here she comes!.

By **Anna Lanigan**, The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Nina Eason's colour, persistence, passion and staunch leadership has rung out as a clear voice for the health of our beloved Moonee Ponds Creek. Giving selflessly of her time and energy, Nina contributed to both practical actions and as a brave advocate for the creek's value to the community. It is fitting that Nina's work culminates with the completion of the reimagined creek, the first section to be rehabilitated from a concrete drain to a functioning waterway. Thank you for all your efforts Nina.

Mayor Cr Ava Adams, Moonee Valley City Council.

You've -got -to -be -echiding - me



There is a delightfully spikey new resident in the surrounds of our Moonee Ponds Creek! Echidna sightings have been reported in Boeing Reserve, Strathmore Heights, all the way down to the bike path at Travencore!

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek member, Louise Whiting emailed *Ponderings* with exciting news about an Echidna that was spotted foraging along the creek in Pascoe Vale South. Louise first became aware of the Echidna when a friend of hers, Rob, sent a photo which she then shared with FoMPC Secretary, Terri Hopkins. Rob, who was the first to see the Echidna reported:

"I have lived in the vicinity of the Moonee Ponds Creek for the better part of 50 years, and I have never seen such an abundance of wildlife as I have recently. Some of the latest sightings include eels and what seems to be some sort of rather large catfish. I cannot recall ever seeing these before.

Even more so, it was such a wonderful surprise to spot an Echidna waddling slowly along one of the many tracks that run beside the Moonee Ponds Creek.

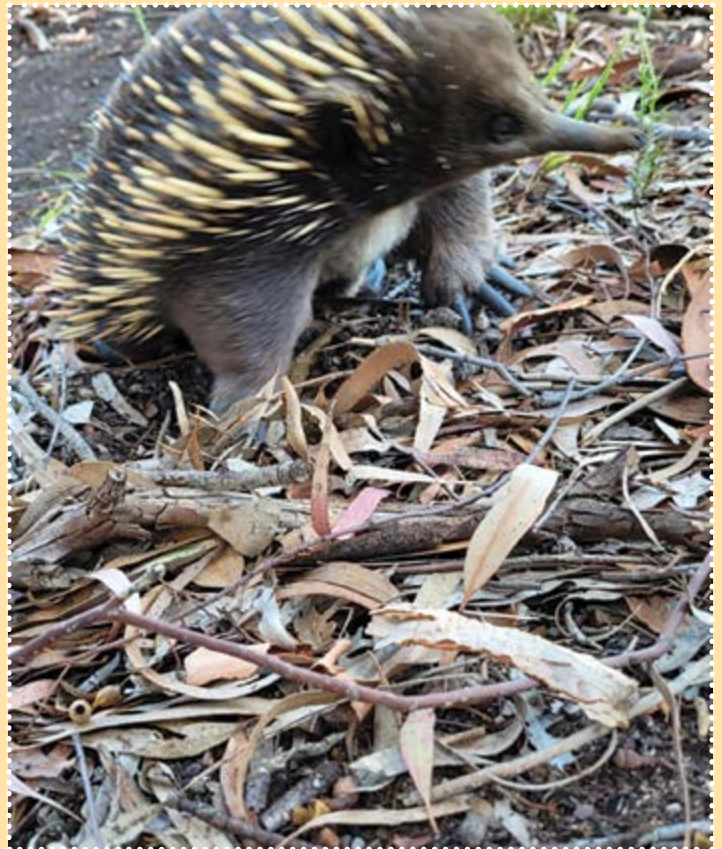
As I went closer, it turned into its characteristic defensive ball, but this only lasted a few seconds. I assume it did not perceive me as a threat, as it then returned to doing

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what echidnas naturally always do - snuffling through the undergrowth and foliage in search of a meal.

Returning the following day with my wife, we managed to spot it again - this time a little further downstream, close to where the foot bridge crosses the creek behind the Cross Keys hotel.

I hope it has some friends and its human counterparts look after such precious bush inhabitants."



Echidna's are shy creatures that appreciate their space. If you see them freeze and try to dig in, this is a sign that they are feeling uncomfortable. So if you do spot a prickly critter, please observe them from a distance that is comfortable for both of you. If you see wildlife heading for trouble, injured or in need of help, the best thing to do is call Wildlife Victoria. They have a 24 hour phone number, and can give advice about what to do or send a wildlife rescue response if needed. Save their details in your phone for quick reference, phone 8400 7300 or web: <https://www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/>.

By *Louise Whiting* and *Millicent Burke, MVCC*

Have you visited our redesigned website yet?

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek website has been redeveloped and in late 2024 it went live.

Many thanks to Bendigo Bank for the \$1,000 donation which made it possible. Websplash Digital, a web design company in Melbourne, made the whole process of redesign very easy by working with the FoMPC Committee to deliver an attractive, bright, easily navigated, accessible and informative site.

Here's the link if you haven't yet visited:
<https://www.mooneepondscreek.org.au>

Go ahead, take a look!





Old foot bridge - missing its nuts

It was a timely walk along the Creek when Greg Lanigan saw the old bridge at Margaret St/Brosnan Crescent being prepared for removal. He was present later when it was craned up and placed on the Merri-bek side of the Creek and made ready for transport. In talking with the workers, Greg learned that the bridge had only been fixed down on one side!

The nuts from the bolts anchoring the bridge to the concrete base on the Merri-bek side were missing! And they had been for decades! As the worker said, **“it could have been interesting if a major flood had occurred”**. The old bridge will have a new, hopefully more secure, future at a rural property. So good to know it is being recycled. Meanwhile the [Brosnan Crescent Naturalisation Project](#) surges ahead with the end in sight.

By *Anna Lanigan*



Ponderings

Send articles to: fompc.ponderings@gmail.com

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, handweeding 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 2025 to give people an opportunity to visit the site.



Native violet, Viola headeracea



Ptilotus

Commemoration of 1970s community campaign to stop concreting the creek

Alex English is seeking any history or archival documents from the Ponderings community about the 1970s community campaign to stop the concreting of the creek channel. We are keen to install some interpretative signage next to the former concrete weir wall (photo 1) which has been partially retained as a seat by the gravel path where the concrete channel was stopped. The signage would benefit from personal stories, photos, newspaper articles or campaign materials.

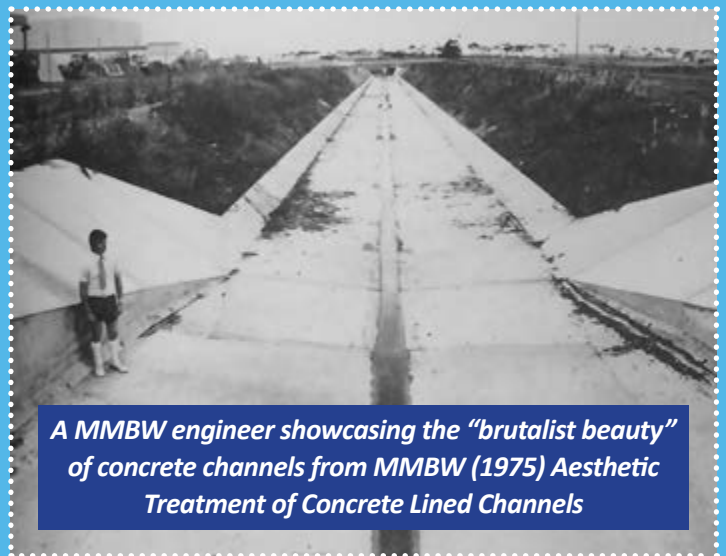
Kelvin Thomson reported that the Strathmore Progress Association (SPA) were the drivers of the resident resistance to the concrete lining that caused it to stop at Strathmore North Primary. SPA members raised concerns with their local member under the Hamer Government who then stopped the concreting to undertake consultation, but not before some counter campaigns from the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW). The photo (middle right) and text are from a 1975 MMBW report *Aesthetic Treatment of Concrete Lined Channels* which was prepared in response to increasing community concerns about the ongoing concreting of Melbourne's waterways including the Moonee Ponds Creek. This interesting report is a counter argument by MMBW highlighting how beautiful concrete can really be when you add grid or dimple patterns to the surface, and really showed the gulf in perspectives and values.

Contact Alex: aenglish@merri-bek.vic.gov.au
Mobile: 0403 603 532

By **Alex English**, *Principal Open Space Planner*
Merri-bek City Council



Weir wall marking where the concrete channel was stopped



A MMBW engineer showcasing the "brutalist beauty" of concrete channels from MMBW (1975) *Aesthetic Treatment of Concrete Lined Channels*

AESTHETIC TREATMENT OF CONCRETE LINED CHANNELS

1. INTRODUCTION

During recent months, several people have publicly criticised the Board for constructing concrete lined channels along such streams as the Moonee Ponds Creek and Gardiners Creek.

Most of the criticism has come from "conservationists" or "environmentalists". Articles have been published by Professor G. Seddon of the University of Melbourne's Centre of Environmental Studies, students of the University of Melbourne's Department of Architecture, students of the Swinburne Institute of Technology, Mr. Ronfeldt-Holmes of Ashburton, the late Mr. Ellis Stones and others.

Strong verbal criticism has been made by leaders of the Merri Creek Action Group, and two of the Board's Commissioners.

Few, if any, of the critics live in properties affected by, or in close proximity to, the Board's concrete channels. Furthermore, no criticism has been received from the hundreds of people whose properties have been saved from flooding or erosion by these works. It should be noted that the Board has constructed drains of this type over the past twenty years and most of the criticism has been made only within the past twelve months.

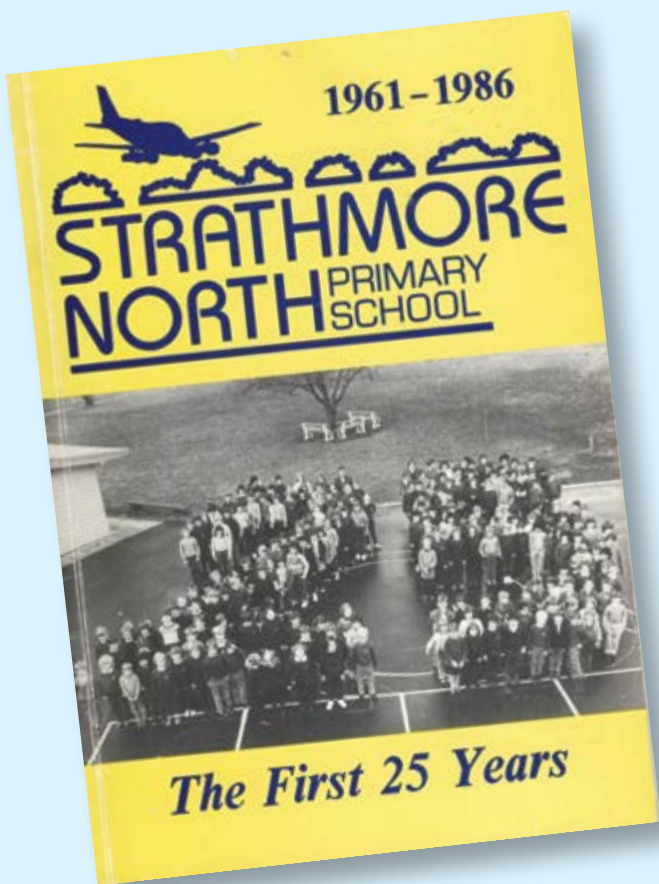
On analysis, the criticism falls into two categories, namely —

- (i) the effect of the works on the environment, and
- (ii) the aesthetics of concrete lined channels.

It is not the purpose of this report to comment on the general environmental impact of drainage works along watercourses. This criticism must be answered in the light of the proposal and the circumstances associated with each section of each watercourse.

This report is devoted only to considering the reasons for adopting concrete lined channels, the alternative methods of lining, and possible methods of improving the aesthetics of the so-called "ugly" concrete lined channels which will need to be constructed in the future.

The introduction to MMBW (1975) *Aesthetic Treatment of Concrete Lined Channels*



Alice Gilbert was a teacher at Strathmore North Primary School for a number of years. She passed away in 2018. Many students still remember her fondly. She wrote a book about the history and her reminiscences of the school between 1961 - 1986, called, "Strathmore North Primary School - The First 25 Years".

Anna Lanigan recently stumbled upon this publication while doing research and brought it to *Ponderings* attention. Ex-students and teachers who attended the school during these early years may be interested in tracking a copy down.

The Establishment of the School

The immediate school district had been very sparsely developed until the post Second World War period. In the mid 1950s, Mascoma Street did not extend very far past the present school's western boundary. A dairy herd grazed peacefully among the boxthorn bushes and Scotch thistles in the area that is now Strathmore Heights, disturbed only by the planes taking off and landing at Essendon Airport (then still the main Melbourne airport). Rabbits and occasionally a fox, could be seen along the airport's northern fence. Local children gathered mushrooms in the paddocks, caught yabbies and small fish in the creek, or hiked across the grassy slopes to the trestle bridge. [Extract]

By Anna Lanigan

Handy websites and Facebook links

Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofmooneeponds creek/

Friends of Merri Creek:

friendsofmerricreek.org.au/

Friends of Edgars Creek:

foec.org.au

Friends of Steele Creek Facebook:

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

GUARDIAN STORAGE

Call 9374 1500

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LOOKING FOR STORAGE?

Guardian Storage Essendon offers everything from boxes and packaging to business storage and household storage solutions. Want to know what our self storage costs? Call us to find out more about our full range of storage spaces for rent to see which of our storage options suit your storage rental needs.

Household storage



Need to declutter, moving house or renovating? Self storage is the perfect solution. From furniture to clothes our secure lock-up storage units ensure your items will be safe and sound.

Business storage



Guardian Storage Essendon provides flexible business and document storage solutions for storing your commercial stock and business records. Client files or excess and seasonal stock, we have a suitable storage solution to streamline your business and free up space.

Location / Trading hours

Guardian storage Essendon is located on Pascoe Vale Road, behind PETstock and Good Life Health Club.

Weekdays: 8:00am – 5:30pm
Weekends: 9:00am – 4:00pm

A symbiotic story

Parasites have a poor reputation. Can mistletoe buck the trend?

Once considered a pest and often removed, mistletoe might just help us boost the biodiversity of our urban forest, and fast! Read on to discover more about their sticky story of symbiotic relationships and how you can help.

Mistletoe fast facts

- Mistletoe are *Hemiparasitic*, or partially parasitic. Relying on their host for only part of their needs.
- Of the more than 1500 species of mistletoe worldwide, 92 are only found in Australia.
- Mistletoe doesn't depend on soil at any stage of its lifecycle.

Life starts in the canopy

The mistletoe lifecycle starts as a sticky seed on the branch of a host plant. The seed germinates and sends out a glandular hypocotyl. This develops a haustorium disk and exudes enzymes to dissolve the outer layers of the hosts' bark - connecting the xylem of the seedling directly to the xylem of the host. The mistletoe seedling uses water and minerals from the host but still depends on its own photosynthesis to produce energy.



A germinated mistletoe seed sends out a glandular hypocotyl (not a root). [Photo credit: Boobook48]

Biodiversity booster

Although a hemiparasite, mistletoe plants do give back. They have long flowering and fruiting seasons that provides an important, reliable, food source for birds, bats and insects. Mistletoe can provide dense habitat for nesting, protection, and shade. In 2012, when Professor David M. Watson and colleagues from Charles Sturt University removed mistletoe from entire woodland patches, the number of woodland bird species dropped by 30 per cent compared to unaltered sites.

Ponderings

Send articles to: fompc.ponderings@gmail.com

Balancing urban canopy demands

So why do we put up with this parasite? Importantly for urban areas, mistletoe can add habitat to a tree that is otherwise of limited value to wildlife.

A tree that is low in habitat value can still be very valuable. Established trees offer greater shade and help mitigate urban heat. In 2017, the City of Melbourne artificially planted 832 mistletoe seeds on 26 London plane trees to test out the idea of boosting biodiversity.

Food for thought

Some animals have a special symbiotic relationship with our sticky mistletoe. Mistletoebirds (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*) can eat invertebrates and nectar, but they primarily feed on mistletoe. They even have a modified digestive system specifically for mistletoe fruit! The fruit can pass through the bird in less than 12 minutes.



When the Mistletoe bird poops out a mistletoe seed, the bird twists characteristically and wipes the sticky mistletoe seed onto the bark of the host. [Photo credit: David Cook]



*The Mistletoe moth (*Comocrus behri*) feeds on mistletoe plants when an adult moth (nectar) and as larva (leaves).* [Photo credit: David Cook]



Several mistletoe species are host plants for the *Imperial Jezebel butterfly* (*Delias harpalyce*).

[Photo credit: David Cook]

Mistletoe markers

Mapping mistletoe in urban areas will help build a database of biodiversity. It is easy to join in. When out for a walk or enjoying a park, see if you can spot and log mistletoe plants. Just by adding your observations to the iNaturalist app, you can help land managers and your local nature out.

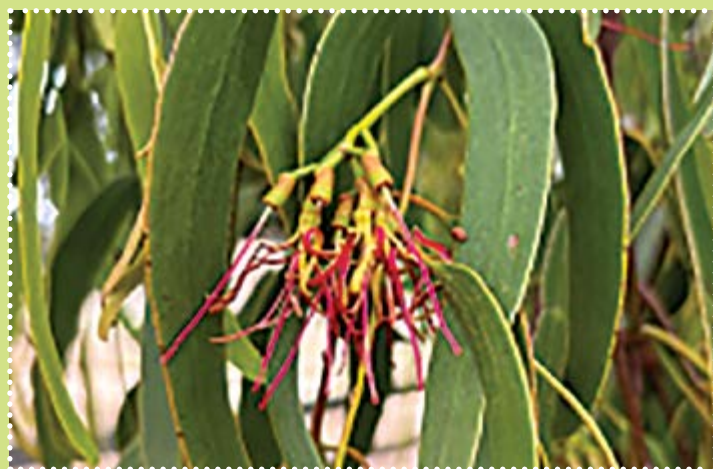


Top tips for mistletoe spotting:

Stepping back and looking at the tree canopy can help when looking for mistletoe. Can you see the dense patches in this tree canopy? There are two mistletoe plants in this photo.



Look for a clump of leaves with a different colour. The leaves of the mistletoe plant in this photo are more yellow than the leaves of the host tree.



Mistletoe leaves can resemble eucalyptus leaves, but on closer inspection you might notice the leaves are thicker, and the flowers are different.

Keep an eye out for these species on your walk:

- o Box mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*) Flowers mostly December–January
- o Drooping mistletoe (*Amyema pendula*) Flowers all year
- o Creeping mistletoe (*Muellerina eucalyptoides*) Flowers mainly in the summer. The only species with epicortical runners and spreads by ‘creeping’ along the branch of the host.
- o Harlequin mistletoe (*Lysiana exocarpi*) Flowers mostly December–April
- o Grey mistletoe (*Amyema quandang*) Flowers mostly May–October.

Get involved!

You can make observations via iNaturalist any time.

To download the iNaturalist app visit:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/>

If you love citizen science and want to join in nature spotting activities, keep an eye out for the Global City Nature Challenge from 25 to 28 of April. Visit the website:

<https://www.citynaturechallenge.org>

Reimagining Your Moonee Ponds Creek

We've got some exciting news... Works to transform Moonee Ponds Creek are almost complete!

We're pleased to announce that the Strathmore side of the creek is now open and ready for you to enjoy! We've already noticed ducks, cormorants and other wildlife enjoying the space and making their home here, which is wonderful to see.

In this newly transformed space, Melbourne Water has upgraded the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail which was widened and replaced with concrete, and relocated away from the waterway. We created a gravel path next to the creek for people who like to wander at a slower pace and enjoy the sights and sounds of the flowing creek.

We planted thousands of grasses, sedges, trees and shrubs, which are establishing well. We'll be back in Autumn 2025 to do some more revegetation to fill in the gaps.



We invite you to explore the stepping stone crossing to hop over to the other side of the creek and perhaps spot some insects, water bugs, ducks and other birds along the way. Or you can use the new, wider bridge to venture to the other side.

Caring for the environment

Keeping the area clean is important for protecting the delicate ecosystems and making it enjoyable for everyone. Please be sure to keep to the designated paths and stepping stones. These paths allow you to explore safely without disturbing the plants and animals.



Please remember to pick up after your dog and dispose of waste responsibly. And to help look after our local wildlife, please keep your dog on a leash while enjoying the new space.

What's next?

Our major works on the Oak Park side are almost finished. The works to create stepped terracing on the banks have been the most complex part of the project to deliver, and have taken a lot longer than we anticipated. The good news is that these works are almost finished and we're opening up some areas on this side of the creek over the holiday period. Temporary fencing next to the new shared path and boardwalk will remain in place until permanent fences are installed in January-February 2025.

From mid-January 2025, we'll be starting to pack up the site sheds and heavy machinery, and restoring areas affected by our works. There are some other minor activities we need to complete between January and March 2025, such as the installation of public safety fencing in the ponding and terracing area, line markings on shared paths, landscaping, and reinstatement of fencing around the oval.

We'll be back again in April-May 2025 to complete the planting when weather and ground conditions are more favourable. Plantings in the terracing space and boardwalk area will help to blend the rockwork and infrastructure in with the natural surroundings.

continued over page >>

Ponderings

Send articles to: fompc.ponderings@gmail.com

Cultural Immersive Trail

Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation continue to work with the Chain of Ponds Collaboration and design consultants, Kelp Creative, to create an experiential trail along both banks of the creek. The trail will highlight the cultural and natural values of the waterway, and celebrate Moonee Ponds Creek as a place owned, lived in and celebrated by Wurundjeri people.

Using a mixture of signage, art and digital media, the project invites the community and trail users to learn from Elders and knowledge holders about aspects of Wurundjeri culture and history, and encourages people to become better connected and care for Country. Installation of cultural elements is expected to start in early 2025.

The Reimagining Moonee Ponds Creek Project Team would like to thank our community for your patience, understanding and cooperation through the impacts of construction.

Keep up to date with what's happening

For more information about this project, visit the project web page at: www.melbournewater.com.au/RYMPC

Email: mooneeponds.creek@melbournewater.com.au

Phone: 1800 952 911

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday 29 March 2025, 11.00am – 2.00pm

COMMUNITY LAUNCH

REIMAGINING MOONEE PONDS CREEK

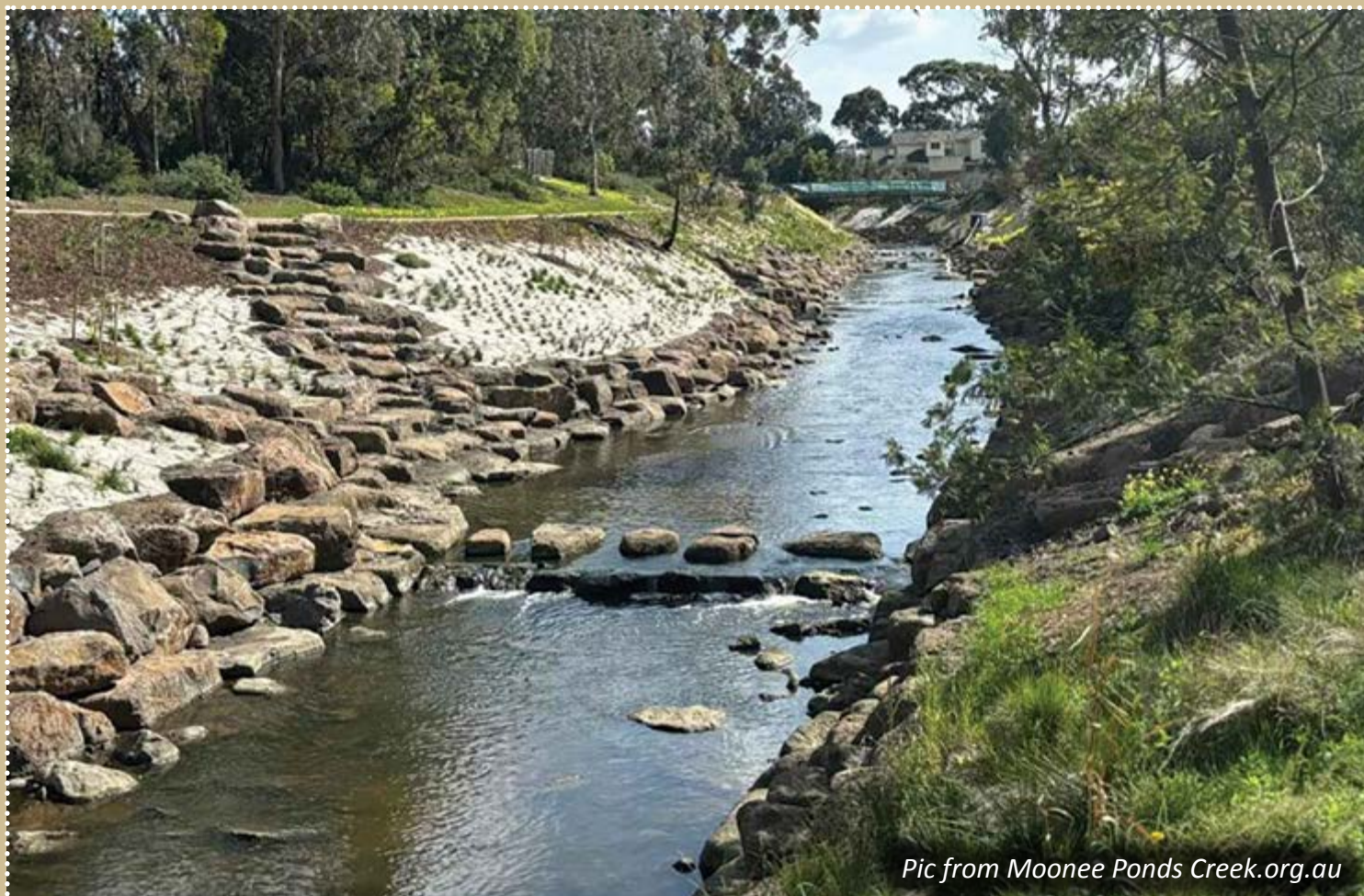
Oak Park South Oval, behind the Sports and Aquatic Centre

Melbourne Water is planning a community event to celebrate the Reimagining Moonee Pond Creek's (RMPC) project completion at this site, and official re-opening of the space.

While the Moonee Valley side is already open it is hoped that the Merri-bek side of the project and the Cultural Immersive Trail will be finished by 29 March. The Launch is designed to re-open the whole area, and to invite the community to walk the Cultural Immersive Trail. There will be lots of fun activities for locals to enjoy.

Below is the December 2024 community bulletin from Melbourne Water for more information.

<https://www.melbournewater.com.au/media/27026/download>



Pic from Moonee Ponds Creek.org.au

Diary Dates

Last minute cancellations and changes will be posted to our [Facebook](#) page.

Date/Time	What	Where
Saturday 29 March 11:00am - 2:00pm	Community Launch Reimagining Moonee Ponds Creek	Oak Park South oval, behind the Sports and Aquatic Centre.
Tuesday 22 April 6.30pm	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek General meeting	Sam Merrifield Library, 762 Mt. Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds.
25 to 28 April	Global City Nature Challenge	https://www.citynaturechallenge.org
Monday 16 June 6:30pm	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek General meeting	Sam Merrifield Library, 762 Mt. Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds.
Monday 18 August 6:30pm	Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek General meeting	Sam Merrifield Library, 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/friendsofmooneeponds creek/

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: mooneeponds creek.org.au and complete the membership form

or write to: **PO Box 1092, Moonee Ponds, Victoria 3039.**

