

Editorial : You and your council

In October the City of Monash will be holding elections for councillors. Why should you care? Local government is an indispensable part of the democratic process and is the sector with which we are most likely to engage. As members of the "Friends of Damper Creek Reserve" we enjoy a close relationship with our local representatives and council staff. This has allowed our group to express our opinions and influence outcomes of council decisions. At the most basic level, the enthusiasm of our group for Damper Creek is an essential factor in the level of maintenance received in the reserve. Regardless of the grants received by our group from Melbourne Water, it is the ongoing maintenance, the mowing, weeding, infill planting, maintenance of paths and landscaping works that make up the bulk of the costs in keeping Damper Creek looking good and making it a significant recreation resource for the City of Monash. Your membership is an important part of this allocation of resources.

However, influence extends far beyond mere numbers. It is the engagement with councillors and council staff (and state and federal members) which allows FoDCR to have a significant influence on council decisions. Our active involvement in issues such as the VPO, Sadie Street and the 29 Park Rd development ensures that we have a voice in such issues.

Ensure that this support continues, research candidates for the forthcoming elections, question them on their policies and, where matters influencing environmental issues are concerned, identify yourself as a member of the Friends of Damper Creek Reserve.

Meeting with Greg Hunt

Last month members met with the Federal shadow minister for the environment [Mr Greg Hunt], and the Liberal candidate for the seat of Chisholm in Damper Creek. The meeting was purportedly about the environment but was actually to canvas the FoDCR's view regarding a proposed Federally-funded, 'Green Army' the implementation of which would be dependant upon the Liberal party forming government.

The 'Green Army' envisages four 'brigades' in each federal electorate with each brigade comprising 10 young people [unemployed or disadvantaged] to be employed for six months on environmental projects. Many pictures were taken and the meeting will presumably be labelled 'community consultation'.

Guest Speaker Programme:

At the time of writing, Michael Green will not be able to present as guest speaker this month. Michael apologises profusely and promises to present to a future meeting.

Our Annual General Meeting

Please come. Many people are reluctant to attend AGM's for fear of being press-ganged into a committee position. Rest assured, we have nominations for all positions and we will willingly accept further nominations.

Damper Creek Observations

Judy Borg provided the following piece. An illustration of the benefits and surprises of careful observations in Damper Creek.

MAGPIE SPRING

On Friday morning, 8th of August about 10a.m., I was walking along the top path west of the bridge and just past the property of the white

house jutting out into the Reserve. On the lawn between the two clumps of small eucalypts there were two young magpies engaged in conflict, while the lady of contention, feathers fluffed, stood close by. The head male of the north group walked in and escorted the lady back to where others had gathered to watch. Others of the North family flew in and watched, while several of the South family flew into the trees near me and took an active interest. I watched for some time, but it was stalemate – just a wing of the Southern young blade showing above the grass, for he was held down by his opponent. I walked on, but came back about 15 minutes later. Every bird was in the same position as when I left. [There may have been several more of the South family, come to watch.] Ah....Spring!

Doggie Stories

The scope of the "Doggie Stories" section of the website has been expanded to include council regulations on the management of dogs in reserves.

Container Deposit Legislation

As instructed by the June meeting (see June 'Damper Creek Doings'), the Secretary sent the motion regarding the desirability of a drink container deposit scheme (CDS) to our local Federal and State parliamentarians (Ms Anna Burke MP and Mr Michael Gidley MLA) and to the Victorian Minister for the Environment & Climate Change. All three have replied to our letters that urged the adoption of the scheme that has run successfully in South Australia for over 20 years and that will be introduced into the Northern Territory this year.

Mr Gidley noted that he is 'a conservationist' but that Victoria is awaiting a report from COAG's Standing Council on Environment &

Water (SCEW). Apparently, unlike a progressive state such as South Australia, Victoria cannot act unilaterally since we may be flooded with empty bottles from NSW! I think I may have seen the 'bottle police' at the SA border protecting them from an empties flood from Victoria.

The letter from The Hon Ryan Smith, the Minister, had many phrases in common with those in Mr Gidley's letter. He did acknowledge that a bill had been introduced by Colleen Hartland in mid-2011 (Beverage Container Deposit & Recovery Scheme Bill) although without disclosing the position of Ms Hartland in the parliament. In fact, Colleen Hartland MLC is a Greens Party member of the Victorian upper house. Her bill was promptly sent to a committee for a decent burial. Their findings could have come from the pen of Sir Humphrey Appleby..."a raft of complex policy and implementation issues and obstacles" were identified. It is a though the SA legislation does not exist. Not only does it exist, it has not required amendment.

Ms Burke wrote that the Australian government is a signatory to the 'Australian Packaging Covenant' which requires a co-operative approach between 'industry, the community and all spheres of government' (N.B. the word order is noteworthy). SCEW has held industry, community and interested parties 'consultation', a word that bitter experience shows can hide the briefest of contacts. The APC website makes no mention of the SA or NT deposit schemes.

You can keep abreast of developments on www.scew.gov.au/strategic-priorities/packaging-impacts.html. After the failure of the hapless Peter Garrett when Minister for the Environment to get the

legislation approved, breath-holding on this matter is not recommended.
Campbell Miles

Important dates to remember:

	August	Notes
Meeting:	Wed 22nd - 7:30pm	Alvie Hall
	Annual General Meeting	
Working Bee	Sun Aug 26th 10-00am to 12-30pm	Mushroom Rock
	September	
Meeting:	Wed 26th- 7:30 pm	Alvie Hall
W-Bee	Sun Sept 30th 10-00am to 12-30 pm	TBD

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Damper Creek Bushland Reserve: part of the Yarra Catchment.

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FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.

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DAMPER CREEK DOINGS

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