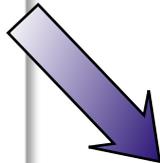


Damper Creek Doings

July 2017



The newsletter of
FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.
Reg No. A0029531G
<http://www.friendsofdampercreek.org.au>
P.O. Box 2063 Mount Waverley 3149
Email: secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com

Community Planting Day - Sunday 30 July. Meet at the Park Rd car park. Thank-you sausage sizzle at 12:30 pm



From the Editor (acting):

For many years - or perhaps for always - the logo for the Friends of Damper Creek has been the generic green tree at the top of this newsletter. I wonder if it is not time for a more specific logo. The photo on the left is courtesy of Philip Johnston and I think with it being specific to Damper Creek Bushland Reserve, it would make an excellent logo for the Friends Group. What do you think?

MONASH STREET TREE STRATEGY

In June 2016, a meeting of Monash Councillors voted to accept 'The Monash Street Tree Strategy' as proposed by Council staff and external consultants (see Minutes 24 June 2016 Ordinary Council meeting, page 34).

The document is on the Council website: <http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/about-us/council/publications/monash-street-tree-strategy-2016.pdf>

The stated aim was 'to achieve high quality, consistently-planted and attractive avenues'. The document raised several issues that staff believed needed to be addressed by the Policy:

- 'Significant gaps in the existing tree canopy' – estimated at 10%. The report noted that Monash has 87,600 street trees (and they have counted every one including species, location and useful life expectancy [U.L.E.]) with provision to accommodate a further 12,500 trees in the City.
- 'Many of our trees are in decline (estimated at 22% or 19,000 trees) and these will require replacement within the next 30 years'.
- 'Increasing densification (?more houses) and associated loss of trees within private properties means the role of street trees is becoming increasingly important'.
- 'Monash has inherited several de-listed tree species which represent opportunities for staged replacement'.

The City was divided into four precincts and the areas around Damper Creek and most of what would have been the City of Waverley was assigned to the Central Hills precinct.

On Local Roads, the plans were to 'establish consistent and thematic street tree planting patterns which support and enhance the character of local neighbourhoods and street-scapes'.

Also planned was support for the creation of 400-metre wide habitat corridors associated with the city's creek-line and linear parks to increase connectivity between the core habitat areas, street tree canopy and reserves. The Friends of Damper Creek would certainly support this initiative.

The document notes 'The successful implementation of the Strategy requires partnership with our community.'

Fourteen streets were selected by staff for extensive street tree renewal in 2016/2017 including Glen Tower Drive and Essex Road, both in Central Hills precinct. In late 2016, residents in these streets were informed of the plans and asked to nominate one of two suggested tree species.

The plans called for a 'staged replacement' of trees. So how did Council proceed?

The approach that Council adopted was to remove - at one go - 120 trees of the 165 trees from Glen Tower Drive – not quite clear-felling but pretty close! The initiation of the process led to community outrage and the locals began an online petition to collect signatures and comments. For Essex Rd, the plan was to remove 59 of 65 trees at once and then replant. Regrowth would take years and meanwhile the amenity of the street suffers, as does the fauna due to a wholesale loss of habitat. Again, an online petition was established and Council was forced to rethink. After reconsideration, only four trees were replaced in Glen Tower Drive and seven in Essex Rd.

As a result of the success of the petitions, Council was forced to halt the process and re-assess the program. It has also resulted in Councillors voting at the recent, June meeting to adopt a significantly modified program of tree replacement over a longer time frame. The full details of the revised program are available on the Council website in the minutes of the June meeting where you will see that the revised program was approved by all but Councillor Davies. For example, rather than removing any tree with a useful life expectancy of less than 10 years, it will only be removed if its life expectancy is now assessed to be less than two years. Residents will be offered a wider range of replacement trees rather than the two proposed.

Whilst the strategy is very good (and the document is worth reading), the implementation has caused alarm for residents. Given the 10% of canopy that needs to be made good, perhaps Council can start there; instead of extensive removal from the entire length of individual streets, Council needs to consider a whole-of-City approach with progressive replacements across all of Monash and perhaps over a 10 year time frame. Meanwhile, there is a additional 12,500 trees to plant.

Q: Why does Damper Creek Bushland Reserve even exist?

A: Because, like the protests of residents over the unfortunate implementation of the Monash Street Tree Strategy, local residents living around Damper Creek discovered to their horror that the land was not protected public open space and the then City of Waverley planned its subdivision for more residential development. Damper Creek would have disappeared into a large, underground drain and the land clear-felled and disappeared under the relentless encroachment of suburbia.

On 26 September 1968 concerned citizens met and said 'No!'. As Kevin Ryland will tell you, it was only the beginning of a protracted campaign.

26 September 2018 will be **50** years since this momentous protest that ultimately bore such prolific fruit.

The question is, how should their achievements be honoured by us in September next year? Rebecca Paterson attended the June working bee and I drew her attention to the plaque we erected at mushroom rock, near the Alice Street bridge to memorialise the 40 year anniversary. What you think would be a fitting tribute for the Golden Anniversary?

As one does, Rebecca whipped out her mobile phone and took a picture of the plaque! The Mayor agreed - formal acknowledgement is in order.

Damper Creek Doings is printed by Michael Gidley MP, as a community service. Content is the responsibility of The Friends of Damper Creek Reserve Inc.

Damper Creek is part of the Yarra catchment and is financially supported by Melbourne Water and Monash City Council.

Contributions to Damper Creek Doings are welcomed by the Editor. Please submit content by email to the secretary: secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com

Our guest speaker at the June meeting was Jan Mattrow.

A long-term resident of Mount Waverley, Jan runs the Outlook Rd wildlife sanctuary with seeming good humour despite the occasional setback as not all her 'patients' can be saved. Jan and her three assistants care for orphaned and injured native wildlife that are delivered to her for care. Animals delivered to the sanctuary include ring-tail and brush-tail possums, flying foxes (often injured when trapped in nets placed over fruit trees), tawny frogmouths, young magpies, ducks and ducklings and lorikeets. They have even received echidnas! Jan said that given the rudimentary construction of a frogmouth nest, she is surprised more do not fall out on windy days. She add that the fledglings are so light, they flutter to the ground unharmed but cannot regain the nest.

The aim is to nurture them back to health and then to release them as near as possible to the habitat they came from and in their home range. This may involve Jan climbing to a great height to reach the nest but this is the best way to ensure maximum survival.

Jan's backyard is dedicated to her passion with appropriate cages of varying sizes plus a bedroom for indoor care when required. Jan estimates that it costs about \$20,000 per year to provide the necessary care. (Jan's details on our website)

For Your Diary

Wednesday 26 July at 7:30 pm: Admin meeting. Members are welcome.

Sunday 30 July at 10:00 am: Community Planting Day. Please meet in the Park Road car park. The usual thank you sausage sizzle will follow.

Wednesday 23 August at 7:30 pm: Annual General Meeting and election of office bearers.

Sunday 27 August at 10:00 am: Working bee