



Damper Creek Doings

May 2018



DOUG'S DELIBERATIONS

How green is Monash?

As a "Middle Ring" suburb, Monash was developed in a period when parks, large building blocks and private gardens were appreciated. Moving to the "urban fringe" in the 1960s promised open space and a connection with nature combined with

the urban planning benefits of well-designed infrastructure and community facilities. More than half a century later, how does Monash stack up with its green credentials?

In 2015 the "Monash Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy" was commissioned. On the measure of urban greenness, Monash fared poorly against suburbs closer to the city. The percentage tree canopy cover for Monash is 19.4% compared with Boroondara at 28.1%, Stonnington at 25% and Glen Eira at 20%. Furthermore Monash's cover has declined from 26% in 1992. This compares to the "City of Melbourne Urban Forest Strategy" which aims for 40% canopy cover by 2040 in order to mitigate the heat island effect. The loss of tree canopy is continuing apace in spite of the existence of the Vegetation Protection Overlay and requirements of developers to incorporate a proportion of garden space whenever a block is redeveloped. The "moonscaping" of blocks is a regular feature in the streets around Damper Creek.

Members will be surprised to learn that the "Monash Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy" was tabled at the August council meeting of the City of Monash and councillors voted to withhold it from public release over concerns that it implies further controls on how people can manage trees on their own property. It should be noted that the decline in canopy cover in Monash is due to loss of trees on private land and canopy cover on public land has increased since 1992, mainly due to plantings in reserves and along freeways. Although this report has not been released to the public, it was tabled at Monash's meeting in August 2017 with discussions and resolutions in the minutes for the same meeting - a link is provided below.

The report will be tabled again at the 29 May meeting. Further delays will serve to postpone public discussion on this issue and delay efforts to arrest declines in tree cover.

You can influence the outcome by contacting councillors and urging them to support the release of this report for community consultation. See over for contact details...

The newsletter of

FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.

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<https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/abou-ut-us/council/council-meetings/2017-29-august/1.1-attachment-council-meeting-29-august-2017.pdf>

Jubilee Project Update

The committee is pleased to announce that funding has been approved for the "Jubilee Project" to celebrate fifty years since the initial efforts to preserve Damper Creek Reserve. Details have yet to be finalised but, broadly speaking, the project will involve landscaping the open area on the West side of Park Road near High Street Road.

Guest Speaker for June

David Berry, Chairman of the "Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society" will address the meeting in June. The Tree Society was the winner of the Inaugural Victorian Urban Landcare Award in 2017. It has been a force for the environment in the City of Whitehorse since 1959 and has been instrumental in the creation of the Special Residential Zone (now the Significant Landscape Overlay No. 1) in Blackburn with its tree control provisions and in establishing community Bushland Park Advisory Committees in Whitehorse. It has also actively promoted the planting of indigenous plants and published regular newsletters, plant guide booklets and an indigenous plants poster.

Help Save the World

Although we are an unashamedly local organisation, occasionally we realise that the internet allows us to broadcast our message worldwide. We received an email from a teacher, Hannah Ainsworth, in the United States saying that the students had found the FODCR website and found the links it provided particularly useful. In return, they provided a link that you may find interesting.

<https://www.homeadvisor.com/r/home-science-backyard-conservation/>

COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY

Each year we hold a community planting day - usually at the June or the July working bee, followed by a thank you barbecue. This year the community planting day will be determined by when the area on Park Rd is ready for planting as part of the Jubilee Project.

As Doug mentioned in his column on page 1, Monash Council has approved the funding for the Jubilee project to proceed but the funding does not become available until next financial year i.e. after 1 July.

Hence it would seem most likely that the planting day will be delayed until the August working bee since considerable preparatory work is required before planting can be undertaken.

We will have an update on plans at the meeting on Wednesday.

DRAFT MONASH URBAN LANDSCAPE AND CANOPY VEGETATION STRATEGY

As Doug has comprehensively outlined, this important strategic document has the key aims and objectives of:

- Increasing canopy tree cover across public and private land from 22% to 30% by 2040 to create a more liveable, sustainable and resilient city
- Maximising the retention of existing healthy mature large canopy trees on public and private land to support liveability and cultural heritage values
- For Council to provide a leadership role with best practice tree planting and management on public land
- Community education to promote the health and wellbeing and environmental benefits of trees in the community particularly in the context of creating a more resilient and sustainable urban environment for future generations
- Protect and enhance Monash's green "garden city" character within the contemporary context of climate change and forecast urban growth and change.

The plan was prepared at considerable cost to ratepayers and it now appears that some Councillors have decided that it should never be released for public comment, in effect 'burying' the document.

Whilst Rebecca Paterson was and is strongly supportive of the document, the decision to delay the release of the document for public discussion last August was on a motion from Cr Lake. The motion passed narrowly.

So this is probably our last chance to garner sufficient votes to ensure the document is released and not left to gather dust. It appears that many councillors have already decided one way or the other. Two councillors have yet to declare their intentions and members of FoDCR are urged to lobby Cr M.T.Pang Tsoi and Cr Shane McCluskey ASAP to ask for their vote to release the document for public discussion:

MTPang.Tsoi@monash.gov.vic.au

Shane.McCluskey@monash.gov.vic.au

Cr Pang is one of our Ward Councillors and representative of the Friends of Damper Creek on Council. And no harm in copying in the Mayor as well.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 23 May, 7.30 pm at Alvie Hall. General meeting of members.

On the agenda:

- Welcoming new members
- Can we shorten proceedings at meetings?
- Jubilee project - update after meeting with Michael Grant

Please note that the arrangement put in place last year with alternate monthly meetings of the management committee and general meetings was dropped at the end of last year. This year each monthly meeting is a general meeting of members.

Sunday 27 May, 10 am: working bee at the end of Sunhill Rd. Two years ago this area was planted by the bushcrew and the plantings have done well but are now invaded by panic veldt weed and their usual weedy companions. A timely clearing of the area will see excellent growth over the coming wetter months.



Some wildlife photography is still life photography and with the recent rain the fungi are emerging. This photo by our recent presenter, Ian Moodie shows *Gymnopilus popeanus*.

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

If you see something in Damper Creek that you think needs attention, please contact Monash Council on their website and leave a message:

www.monash.vic.gov.au/contact/request-a-service