

**Friends of Damper Creek Conservation Reserve Inc.**  
**AGM – Wednesday 24 July 2024 Alvie Hall Mt Waverley 7.30pm.**  
**President's Annual Report 2023/24**

**Committee & Members Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank all the Committee members for their contributions over the past year, especially the recent amount of work undertaken to attend Landcare seminars and prepare for the ATO tax changes and the changes to the Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) Model Rules for Incorporations (Nov 2023).

**Vice President:** Douglas Scott

**Secretary:** Helen Clements

**Treasurer:** Campbell Miles

**General Members:** Ray Paterson (Noting: CC Hua was on extended leave)

I also want to recognize and give special thanks to the members who volunteer their time to manage critical tasks for the FofDCCR and the Reserve:

**Newsletter Editor:** Douglas Scott

**Membership Data Base Manager:** Jill Anderson

**Noticeboards:** Joan & John Wolf and John & Helen Clements and Philip Johnstone

**Water Watch Co-ordinators:** Frank Carder and Campbell Miles

**Web Manager:** Philip Johnstone

**Facebook manager:** Zac Drummond

**Campfire & Billy tea:** Chris Carra

All mid week weeders / gardeners: Including Clements, Patersons, Scott / Scholes, Miles and Frankie's family

On behalf of the FofDCCR Committee, I also thank all members for their support and all the work they do to maintain and improve our bushland reserve.

Helen has calculated that the FofDCCR volunteers contributed 1523 volunteer hours (about 190 working days or 3 1/2 days a week) over the past year.

**Council & Community Partner Acknowledgements**

The committee wish to recognize the support from our Ward Councillors and thank Cr Anjalee de Silva and Cr Rebecca Paterson for their ongoing support on issues raised by the FofDCCR, especially in regards to vegetation protection and changes to the tax status of community groups.

FofDCCR offer sincere thanks to the Ashwood -Mt Waverley Lions Club members for the catering at our May community planting day and our end of year Friends BBQ, as well as their participation in the planting day. Special thanks also to Maria Irwin for photographing these events.

Thanks to Matt Fregon, MP and office staff for their assistance with photocopying for working bee flyers. Also for the recognition he gave to environmental volunteers and the FofDCCR in Parliament on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

I also want to acknowledge the support of the Monash Sustainability Team particularly for assisting with the creation of the Damper Creek INat project area and for promotion of FofDCCR events through “What’s your Jam” program that promotes environmental events from April through to June.

Finally I want to acknowledge that the FofDCCR ongoing work could not happen without the support of Andrew Baily, Manager of Conservation, Luke Collins, Foreperson Bushland Reserves, James Pote, Damper Creek TeamLeader, and the many Bushcrew staff who supervise working bees. Particularly we recognize their support in planning projects, ordering tubestock, site preparation prior to working bees, planting supervision and response to reported issues.

### **Grants / Funded Projects**

**FofDCCR applied for and received \$8,700 and planted 3,000 plants.**

**Melbourne Water Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Grant** over two years (2023/24 and 2024/25) to maintain waterway health through riparian and mid story revegetation Fern Gully confluence area and a support grant for group administration. Stage 1 - 2023/24 of \$5,000 (excl GST) purchased and planted 2,000 tubestock. The \$500 support grant contributed towards administrative costs (i.e. stationary, postage, photocopying, Post Office box fee, CAV lodgement fee, website registration fee, morning tea catering etc.)

**Yarra Valley Water** service commitment grant of \$2,500 for improved biodiversity outcomes. Purchased 1,000 tubestock for mid story biodiversity infill planting of vegetated beds near Bengal Crescent entrance to attract small birds and to increase habitat connectivity to and along the creek corridor.

**Monash Community Grant (\$700)** to cover Volunteers BBQ catering, Alvie Hall Hire, Zoom subscription and other administration costs.

**Other Donations:** Ritchies Community Benefit (\$474.49) and Flowing Loops Project (\$250)

### **Membership update**

Total 108 paid memberships (either household or individual) comprising 100 enduring memberships and 8 annual memberships. It is estimated that 4 new memberships were received. We also have 21 associates that receive our newsletters and members emails.

## **Community Events**

### **Sunday Working Bees**

**27 Aug, 24 Sept, 29 Oct 2023** – weeding and maintenance in the 2022/23 Project Area near the Duck Pond. 12, 12 and 10 volunteers respectively.

**26 Nov 2023 - Annual End of Year Thankyou to volunteers BBQ** – approximately 24 in attendance despite the rain. Thanks to James Pote for providing access to the Depot Shed for shelter.

**25 February 2024.** Clean Up Australia Day. 14 volunteers attended / collected approx. 2 cubic metres of rubbish

**24 March 2024 and 28 April 2024** – weeding days to prepare project area at Fern Gully. 10 & 17 volunteers attended.

**26 May 2024. Community Planting Day and Lions Club BBQ** – 1500 tubestock were planted out at Fern Gully (Stage 1 Melbourne Water grant) with the balance of 500 to be planted at the August Working bee. Attendance approximately 40 adults and children, including many new volunteers. BBQ and event was enjoyed by all.

**30 June 2024** – Mid Story Infill Planting in beds near Bengal Crescent entrance (Yarra Valley Water Grant) with additional support from MW & Joint Venture Safety Group who provided labour and supply of morning tea (community contribution as part of the Mt Waverley Reservoir Pipe Upgrade). Planted 1000 tubestock. 20 Volunteers.

**28 July 2024** – FofDCCR offering support to FSCVR Planet Ark Day

### **Quarterly General Meetings with Guestspeakers**

22 November 2023 – Max Campbell – Field Naturalists Club of Victoria – (Microbiology) “Biodiversity, Holobionts and Symbiosis” (22 Attendees)

28 February 2024 – Raymond Gibson - Field Naturalists Club of Victoria – “Victorian Gliders & Possums” & Night walk in Reserve (13 Attendees)

22 May 2024 – Social supper only as guest speaker Lina Patel, local artist, cancelled (“Flowing Loops Art Project” to be rescheduled) (4 attendees)

Upcoming guestspeakers:

28 August – Gary Presland, “History of the Kooyong Koot”

27 November will be Krista Mogensen - When Bee Foundation - “Pollinators”.

## **Waterwatch**

In 2023 nine tests were undertaken, and in 2024 we've tested three times to date. The number of tests is low due to the very dry summer leaving us with no water to test until April, and in June due having no volunteers.

From observations the condition of the creek and its banks is generally pretty good, our chemical tests indicate the water quality is generally good for an urban stream of its type. It is noticeable that climate change is changing when the rains come, however unfortunately we have not collected such data.

There's some frustration that Melbourne Water are not devoting the resources, particularly personnel, to the program that they once did, which fact leaves us short of reagents to carry out the tests as we would like. It demonstrates that the system is under stress due to a lack of personnel and if it is not addressed, the program is in jeopardy.

## **Highlights in 2023/2024**

### **Protecting and maintaining the natural environment of DCCR, the waterway and its surrounding open space.**

- Regular communication and two onsite walk throughs with Andrew Bailey and bushcrew (Sept & Feb) to discuss issues, opportunities and priorities and to get updates on the Pathogen outbreak near playground.
- Regular discussions with Monash Sustainability Team
- Final Reserve Statement of Purpose – Still awaiting public release

Next year

- Development of a 5 year strategic plan with Bushcrew which will inform annual plan projects or actions
- Council is identifying priority areas for filtration beds, swales & bank stabilisation – FofDCCR to support the planting

### **Protecting significant flora & fauna and restoring habitat links within the Reserve and waterway corridor**

- Stage 1 - Riparian planting & infill mid story – small bird habitat in Fern Gully (MW Grant). Stage 2 in 2024/25.
- Infill Mid Story – small bird habitat in existing beds on east bank near Bengal Crescent (YVW Grant)
- Dogs on leash signage completed by Monash Council

Next year

- Confirmed the 2024-25 Plant orders valued at \$6,000 (MW and FDCCR) for Fern Gully Stage 2 and infill mid storey planting
- Opportunity to develop a Habitat Box program informed by research

### **Controlling and where possible eradicating pest species**

- Ongoing Maintenance and pest plant removal (i.e. Wildflower Meadow; Duck Pond area; site preparation; post planting care)

Next year

- Opportunities for more regular weeding work parties

### **Enhancing and monitoring the health of the waterways and its environs**

- Ongoing waterwatch program

Next year

- Water Quality is an ongoing issue (we provided several reports to EPA & Council) - Advocate to Council to raise focus of stormwater quality
- Continue advocating for Waterwatch and seek new volunteers

### **Protecting and enhancing the amenity value of the Reserve for the community's enjoyment of nature based experiences and recreation**

- Commenced Built Asset Inventory - Documenting visitor signs and seats in the Reserve so that FDCCR and Bushcrew can have discussion about purpose, condition and upgrades. Hopefully this can expand to include habitat boxes. This will also guide discussion about trail map information.
- Involvement in Monash events within the reserve (i.e. Active Monash in July – Fortnightly Walking Group)

Next year

- Project to update to Reserve Trail Map & Information (with Monash Sustainability)

### **Encouraging public use of the Reserve as an environmental educational resource**

- Established the INat Project Area
- Involvement City Nature Challenge - April Nature Walk and learn to use INat App

Next year

- Follow up partnerships or promotion via Holmesglen TAFE; Deakin or Monash Universities.
- Consider how citizen science data (INat area / Birddata / FrogApp and watchwatch) can be used in reserve management

### **Providing local environment information to the community and promoting the observation of wildlife and plants**

- Regular Facebook posts – 52 followers
- Quarterly Guestspeakers

- Website and noticeboard updates
- Flowing Loops Walkshop Podcast – recorded with Di & Bec Carra in September 2023. Release TBC.

Next year

- Build Facebook followers and consider use of Instagram as part of community engagement

**Promoting the importance of the Reserve, its surrounds and canopy trees for climate resilience and urban cooling**

- Continuing Advocacy for Tree protection to Council, Local Member and the Minister for Planning.

**Encouraging neighbours and the wider community to participate in the care and enhancement of the Reserve**

- Successful community planting days, clean up Australia Day and regular monthly working bees
- Encourage member ideas & involvement (i.e. Children’s activity sheet)
- Promoted the new project areas in reserve with letterboxing (Swayfield, Tarella and Bengal areas)
- Advertising monthly events on the Monash Events page
- Continued monthly newsletters
- Continued relationships with FSCVR, Kooyong Koot, Lions Club & Essex Heights Neighbourhood Watch
- Victorian Friends Network Friends Finder

Next year

- Follow up promotion via Universities, Enviro Volunteers Network & Monash Volunteers.

**Other action for the committee in 2024/25 will be to:**

- Review and update the Working with Children Policy & System

Thanks again and I look forward to working with members to achieve another successful year in 2024-2025.

**Presented by Dianne Carra (President)**