

The Friends of Darebin Creek was formed in 1995 to protect, restore and conserve the Darebin Creek and its adjacent parklands as a natural environment for the enjoyment of the community.

## Upcoming events

12 February: Nest box building

15 February: AGM – Speaker Benedict is 'The Practical Beekeeper'

5 March: Clean Up Australia Day

## 2016 recap

We had a very busy year with lots of events to attend and many people getting involved to make a difference.

Thank you to:

- The committee for their efforts involved in keeping the group running and attendance at most events.
- The bush crews for their dedication, knowledge and enthusiasm.
- Todd Hunter from Darebin Bush Crew who kept us informed on Facebook with what was happening along the creek in his area with some fantastic photos.
- Laura Howell who has produced our newsletter for the past two years.
- To all those who attended the working bees and supported the group with their membership.



A special thank you goes to Helen Walker-Cook, who is moving out of Melbourne. We will miss her greatly after 16 years on the Committee. We had a presentation and gift at our end-of-year celebration evening in December. Best wishes for the future in your new place.

**Sheryl Sibbison**

## Malahang Festival

In November the committee ran an information stall and got to speak to a lot of locals who are interested in the creek health and surrounding area. We welcome our new members who signed up on the day.

## Darebin Creek Sweepers

Congratulations to Sarah who started the group early this year and was nominated for an award in the Darebin and Banyule Sustainability Awards for the year.



Sarah and her group have done a clean-up at selected sites along the creek the third Sunday of each month with a mammoth 100kg collected at each of the last two sites. If you would like to join in or know a site that badly needs attention, go to

her Facebook site Darebin Creek Sweepers.



## Green Street Residents

A huge congrats to the Green Street Ivanhoe Revegetation group being awards finalists in the Melbourne Water River Health Incentive Stream Awards. They came third in the private

landholder category. There were 57 entries for the awards across four categories.

The project, now in its seventh year, is recreating a slice of indigenous bushland along the Darebin Creek in Ivanhoe. In 2010, ten Green Street landholders with adjacent blocks backing onto the Darebin Creek applied for the first of eight Stream Frontage Management Program (SFMP) grants. Although each landholder in this 'wildlife corridor' submitted individual applications, they decided on an innovative approach – to pool their resources and work as a group with a single contact point, managed by resident, Michelle Morris.

Every year they have increased the density of vegetation in the original site and are now at the stage where there is a well-established indigenous vegetation cover.

The result is a healthier habitat, which is a haven for native birds and animals, as well as a welcome green-belt for local residents. Kookaburras, magpies, currawongs, parrots, frogmouths, ducks, wattle birds, pardalotes and wrens are among the birds now regularly sighted. A variety of lizards and insects find shelter in the new habitat. For the first time in over 20 years, the Eastern Froglet has been heard in this section of the creek!



## Look out for Darebin's 'otter'

The Australian water-rat or rakali (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) is an attractive native rodent which functions as a top predator in Darebin Creek and other local waterways. Its ecological role is equivalent to that of otters on other continents. Rakali has many otter-like features, including thick fur coat, blunt and densely bewhiskered muzzle, partly webbed hind feet and furry, tapering tail.



Water-rats grow up to 70 centimetres in length, including their tail which has a conspicuous white tip. They are most often observed swimming, especially in the early morning or evening. However, they frequently leave the water to eat (sitting up and holding food in their forepaws) or search for food. A feeding 'table' – a pile of fragments, such as yabby claws or mussel shells, on a

rock or log – often provides a clue that the species is around.



Rakali is a difficult species to study and little is known about current status and distribution. The Australian Platypus Conservancy (with support from Wettenhall Foundation) is conducting a survey to find out how water-rats are faring throughout Victoria.

Please help by reporting all sightings of water-rats to the APC. Simply email date and location to [platypus.apc@westnet.com.au](mailto:platypus.apc@westnet.com.au). Information is entered on a secure database, used only for conservation purposes.



**Author: Geoff Williams (Australian Platypus Conservancy)**

**Water-rat on land photo: Debbie Handley; water-rat in water photo: Con Boekel**

## Northern Regional Trails Strategy

### The big picture for bike travel in the North

One of our favourite ways to get along the creek is by bike, and the newly released Northern Regional Trail Strategy will hopefully improve that ability. The strategy is a collaboration between the northern municipalities of Melbourne and aims to identify key regional trail links and prioritise these for State Government funding. You will all be aware of the lower Darebin connection currently underway south of Heidelberg Road, but what about the important Tee Street connection, or the upgrading of granitic trails in the northern part of the catchment? The Tee Street Bridge is the last crucial section of a number of year's work that will join both north-south existing trails between Darebin and Whittlesea Councils, but also provide a long awaited east-west creek crossing near Bundoora Park. Whittlesea Council is also on a three-year mission to upgrade all its gravel pathways to hard surface, which is a significant undertaking for this ever growing part of Melbourne.

Check out the full report here:

[https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/media/vanilla\\_content/files/Northern%20Regional%20Trails%20Strategy\\_Final.pdf](https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/media/vanilla_content/files/Northern%20Regional%20Trails%20Strategy_Final.pdf)

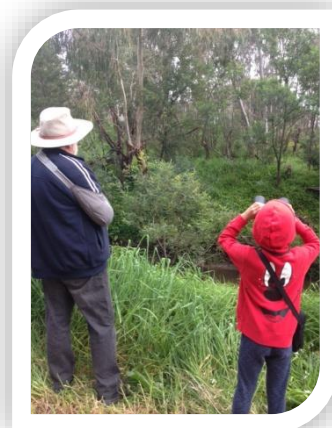
**Adrian Infanti, Darebin Creek Management Committee**

## Bird survey

### **Darebin Creek Bird Survey, Heidelberg West, 16 October**

Sixteen brave bird watchers set out on a windy morning for the annual Darebin Creek Bird count as part of The Aussie Backyard Bird Count from Dougharty Road in West Heidelberg.

Twenty-nine species were recorded on the day, including the Sacred Kingfisher and Darter previously unrecorded in this area. Most entertaining was a Pacific Black Duck that followed us for some of the bird count and the nesting Willie Wagtails chasing Kookaburras away.



**Therese Grinter, Darebin Creek Management Committee**

[Darebin Creek Bird Survey Results 2016](#)

## Napier Waller planting

On a beautiful Sunday morning in late September, several FoDC and community members arrived at Napier Waller for a morning of planting to help regenerate this lovely secluded cul-de-sac on a loop of the creek. Peter Wiltshire and Michael Bradley had already set up the trailer and filled buckets of water for us to soak the plants in.



This year's plantings were mid-storey trees and shrubs, consisting of: Blackwood, Hedge Wattle, Kangaroo Thorn, Prickly Moses, Prickly Current-bush, Hop Goodenia, Hemp Bush, Rivermint, Hazel Pomaderris, Victorian Christmas Bush, Large Kangaroo-apple and Sweet Bursaria. Next year's plantings will be mainly ground-storey grasses, creepers and lilies.

Peter gave us an intro to the task ahead, and which plants should go close to the creek for the most moisture. He then gave us free rein to choose whatever plants we liked and to plant where we liked.

There were so many lovely areas to plant in – you could be sociable, or could choose a quiet area by yourself to plant if preferred. More people arrived, including a young local family, and it was also great to catch up with the parklands' previous Artist in Residence and FoDC member, Katie Roberts, who, after the planting was finished, did some sketching of Napier Waller House.

It was a very productive morning, and such fulfilling work helping this area return to its original condition, and seeing it look better each time we visit!

**Helen Walker-Cook**

## Clarendon St entrance

### Darebin Creek Shared trail at Clarendon Street, 30 October



On a comfortable Sunday morning, Todd welcomed seven of the Friends of Darebin Creek to the Clarendon St entrance to the Darebin shared pathway. This is where the Darebin Bush Crew would host the Friends of Darebin Creek for the October 30 working bee.

When the start time had been reached and only just exceeded we figured all who were going to arrive had done so. Todd gave us a brief overview of the site, which took in the recent activities of the Friends of Darebin Creek.

In February we had spread the generous piles of mulch. In May we planted the tubestock, again provided by Darebin Bush Crew.



It was immediately apparent that things had gone very well since that time as the survival rate was high and the growth rate very satisfactory. Pelargoniums were plush, Rubus was rambling, everlastings were just beginning and the Kangaroo Grass was bounding away.

The thing to do now was to complete the picture with a follow up litter pick and weeding. The team applied themselves to the task and looked about to the

surrounds as well. After a while the job was done with time enough to enjoy a cup of tea and various goodies. We chatted and admired what had become an inviting entry point to the beautiful Darebin shared pathway. Thoughts turned to the New Year and the Calendar for 2017. Todd reckons we will be back on this site for more of the same.



**Adrian Hotchin**

**Photos by Todd Hunter**

## Nicola Davis Conservation Reserve Grassland walk

**27 November 2016**

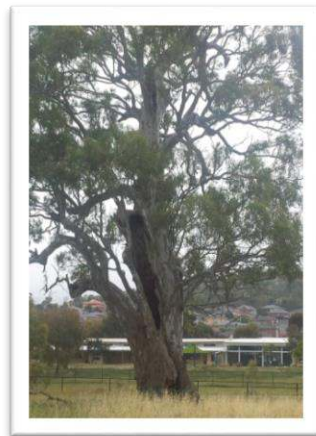
A dull drizzly morning didn't deter members of our group turning up to explore this area. Martin Roberts from the Whittlesea Bushlands Crew guided us through the grasslands.



The diversity was amazing. Attached is a vegetation list from the area and plants we saw on the day have been highlighted by Martin. We look forward to visiting the area again next year.

[Nicola Davis Conservation Reserve – species list](#)





## Contacts

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Helen Walker-Cook: Secretary	0421 730 754
Darebin Creek Management Committee	9499 4454
Water Pollution (quote drain sign number)	9695 2777
Shopping Trolley Hotline	1800 245 022
Wildlife Rescue	0500 540 000
Victoria Police Motorcycle Squad	9380 7283

### Contact Friends of Darebin Creek

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