

November 2024

Two new councils with challenges ahead.

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Image:
Spotted
Pardalote
photo by
Lisa Hui

Save their Songs End of Year Gifting Appeal!

The small birds need your help.

As we reach the end of the year, DCMC are asking the community to support their work and help bring back our small birds to Melbourne. Every dollar donated will support the expansion and management of bird habitat to save their songs!

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. More information on the plight of our small birds can be found on DCMC website www.dcmc.org.au

[I want to help Save their Songs today!](#)

Friends end-of-year BBQ

Tuesday Nov 26 at 6.30 at the Gleeson Centre

Calendars for Christmas

Friends of Darebin Parklands have produced a 2025 calendar.

It celebrates the theme of 'Both Sides Together'. Four locals who express their love of the parklands through photographs are sharing their subtle insights: Kim Davis, Mary Featherston, Lisa Hui and Graeme Vernon.

Printed locally on recycled paper, available at only \$20, it makes a perfect gift, and your purchase will help support this unique place. Available for card, cash or on-line purchase, for an extra \$5 it can be posted or delivered to you.



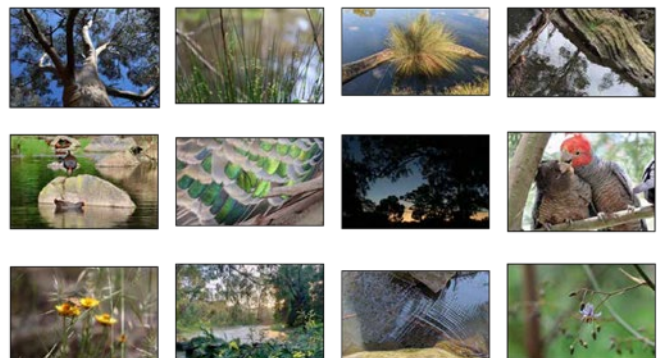
FRIENDS OF DAREBIN PARKLANDS



DAREBIN PARKLANDS BOTH SIDES TOGETHER 2025 CALENDAR

Photographers ©

Kim Davis, Mary Featherston, Lisa Hui and Graeme Vernon



How to Help Flying-foxes -

Protect bat colonies. Protect forest. Plant native trees.
Share fruit or use safe netting. Call for help:

Wildlife Victoria 8400 7300

Fly-By-Night Bat Rescue 0409 530 541

The Wildlife Rescuers 0417 506 941

NB. If bitten or scratched by wildlife seek medical attention

Report of August 27 Meeting

The speaker was Laurence Pope, President of Friends of Bats & Bushcare Inc., kindly replacing Davita Coronel who was ill.

Laurence has been working with bats for over 20 years. He explained how bats have been on earth for 5 million years, and they are important as forest builders. He talked about the highly structured social life of bat camps and pup-rearing.

They are endangered by heat waves and high winds. And there are threats that we humans can control. We can also help by planting fruiting and flowering trees (but not privet) and keeping old dead trees.

The task of rearing orphan pups in 'bat school' is very demanding but rewarding as they all have their own personalities.



FOBB
Friends of Bats & Bushcare

Australian Flying-foxes Grow Forests !



*Grey-headed flying fox mum and her big pup
(photo Vivien Jones)*

"Flying foxes are foresters...if we are to keep the remnants of our forests healthy we need the flying foxes" Dr Nicki Markus, Australian Geographic, flying foxes: foresters on the wing, April 2001

Friends of Bats & Bushcare Inc.

Ecology

Australian Flying foxes are mega-bats (big bats) that pollinate and seed disperse over 100 species of native trees. "Flying foxes are gardeners of the night performing a priceless environmental service," said Peter Cundall. Many hardwood species rely on flying foxes' long-distance pollination work to prevent in-breeding and produce strong timber

Food:

Nectar, pollen and fruit from native trees & exotics

Biology:

Placental mammal, one baby per year - breast fed for up to five months. Their night vision is as good as a cat's. They don't have echolocation (sonar)

They live in large colonies or camps that can be centuries old. They are highly mobile moving from camp to camp (especially females). Many leave southern camps in winter when food is harder to find and head north.

Flying foxes groom constantly and are clean healthy animals - musty camp smell is from a scent produced by males to attract females.

Threats to Flying foxes

Backyard fruit tree netting kills many (share fruit or use safe nets with small holes that fingers cannot get through - 5mm x 5mm or less).

In decline due to starvation caused by land clearing and also camp disturbance.

Urban 'development' destroys camps, displacing flying foxes to poorer locations.

Grey-headed flying foxes and Spectacled flying foxes have declined by over 95% since 1900. Federally listed as "Vulnerable" to extinction.

Advocacy Action Report



Candidates for both Banyule City Council and Darebin City Council accepted the invitation to a tour of Darebin Parklands on October 9.

After a lively and informative conversation with Annette Salkeld and members of our committee, 15 people were taken on tour by Ranger Peter Wiltshire.

6000 flyers, reminding people to take the Parklands into account with their voting, were letter-boxed by 20 members and friends in early October. These were generously designed by Libby Niven and printed gratis by Kosdown Printing.



The on-line questions to candidates (see responses >>):

Please let us know if you support and will advocate for:

1. Continued coordinated stewardship of the Darebin Creek catchment through the Darebin Creek Management Committee;
2. Continued joint governance of Rockbeare Park and the Darebin Parklands by Banyule City Council and Darebin City Council in partnership with the community through the Darebin Creek Management Committee;
3. Continued stewardship of the Parklands by an onsite full-time ranger team as the best way to deliver on the complex needs and roles it plays;
4. Local government funding for the catchment and Parklands to keep pace with the growing demands on and importance of these community assets;
5. Action and investment by local and state governments to mitigate the negative impacts of urban development on our waterways.

<https://www.fdp.org.au/candidate-survey/>

Council Election Results



Elected to Darebin City Council:

- * Central Ward – Kristine OLARIS, will support
- * North Central Ward – Vasilios TSALKOS, will support
- * North East Ward – Matt ARTURI, did not reply
- North West Ward – Gaetano GRECO, did not reply
- * South Central Ward – Ruth JELLEY, will support
- South East Ward – Emily DIMITRIADIS, will support
- * South Ward – Julie O'BRIEN, will support
- * South West Ward – Alexandra SANGSTER, will support
- * West Ward – Connie BOGLIS, will support

Seven new Councillors*.

Seven out of nine "will support" the current management of the Darebin Parklands.



Elected to Banyule City Council:

- Bakewell Ward – Mark DI PASQUALE, did not reply
- Beale Ward – Elizabeth NEALY, (unopposed) did not reply
- Chelsworth Ward – Alida MCKERN, will support
- Griffin Ward – Peter CASTALDO, will support
- Grimshaw Ward – Rick GAROTTI, did not reply
- * Hawdon Ward – Matt WOOD, no contact
- * Ibbott Ward - Alicia CURRY, did not reply
- * Olympia Ward – Mary O'KANE, will support
- Sherbourne Ward – Alison CHAMPION, did not reply

Three new Councillors*.

Three out of nine "will support" the current management of the Darebin Parklands.

Whittlesea City Council,

Of the candidates elected to Whittlesea City Council, none replied to our questionnaire.



It's Time to Act

The future of our beloved Darebin Creek and Parklands is at a crucial turning point, and your voice has never been more important. Following last October's unexpected proposal by Banyule City Council (BCC) to defund the rangers, your strong community response helped secure funding until June 2025 and required BCC to undertake community engagement.

On 4 November, BCC launched its community engagement plan and a survey that will influence decisions about the future management and funding of our creek and parklands. This survey represents one of just two opportunities for community input.

Don't wait until March when BCC's thinking will likely be locked in. Make sure you have your say on these special places now.

We welcome this review as an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and ensure future success. We remain committed to:

- Advocating for transparent and fair processes and strong community involvement in decision-making
- Advocating for the benefits of joint management and the proven model of the Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC)
- Securing long-term environmental and community benefits.

Next Steps

- Complete the survey before the deadline (2 Dec); share what makes these spaces special to you.
- Share this letter and the survey with others who care about our creek and parklands.
- If you have more input to provide or feedback on the survey reach out to your new councillor and Michael Tanner at BCC (Michael.Tanner@banyule.vic.gov.au).
- Stay informed about the March 2025 consultation.
- Follow us on social media or become a member to keep up to date.

Links

Banyule's [Survey](#)

Friends of Darebin Parklands [website](#)

Darebin Creek Management Committee's 2023/24 [Annual Report](#)

Together, we can ensure the continued success and protection of these precious community assets.

Belinda Hill and Graeme Vernon, Secretary, Friends of Darebin Parklands Inc. 13 November 2024

info@fdp.org.au @darebinparklands



Join the Friends of Darebin Parklands

www.fdp.org.au/become-a-member/



Explainer – The Ranger Model

DAREBIN PARKLANDS – THE RANGER MODEL

What's so special about a Parkland run by Rangers, compared with a parkland that is part of a local government council's normal operations? The DCMC employs two Rangers specifically to manage the Darebin Parklands. Rangers have been employed to steward the rehabilitation and management of the Parklands since the late 1970s. They employ an effective way to manage that entity, holistically, working on both sides.

All this work is done by two full-time Rangers.

Imagine Darebin Parkland being run by Council teams: that would require:

- Bush crews to manage the bush areas, maintenance of paths to enable people to move around safely, engagement of volunteers, control of feral animals;
- Council arborists to manage and maintain the safety of the trees;
- Mowing crews for the lawns;
- Open space/park teams to manage amenity plantings, garden beds, entry points and other areas of presentation;
- Waste management teams to pick up scattered or dumped rubbish and empty rubbish and dog waste bins;
- Community engagement teams to organise, advertise & manage community activities;
- Horticulture staff for propagation and plantings;
- Roads and transport teams for bike and walking paths;
- Infrastructure teams for picnic facilities, toilets, and trails for various users;
- Law enforcement for dog and cat management, developing and policing policies;
- Staff to coordinate with Melbourne Water, Councils, adjacent landholders and service providers to the Parklands;
- Heritage advisors to manage the heritage assets within the parklands.

In addition to the above, there are three specialised aspects to the work of the Rangers in Darebin Parklands.

- **The complex leachate management system** (also protecting the Yarra) was established 30 years ago to manage the legacy footprint of the municipal tip that occupied the site. The system was designed by a water engineer who is still a current Ranger, and the task of maintaining and improving that system of pumps and ponds is ongoing.

- **The Bush Kinders**, now a widespread and growing phenomenon, began and evolved in Darebin Parklands, and are able to continue because the Rangers provide a safe, appropriate environment in designated areas.

- **The weekly volunteer Thursday Crew** rely on the Rangers for organisation. The regular, loyal volunteers work on projects such as weed control, seed-collection, propagation and planting of endemic species.

"Restoring Ivanhoe Floodplain" has seen volunteers plant over 7000 plants in 2023 and 2024 alone. To pay 20 people for 2 hours a week at \$20/hr would cost \$83,200 p/a.

For example:

- Fire monitoring;
- Weed and pest animal management;
- Incident management, response to emergency situations;
- Identification, monitoring and protection of threatened or endangered animals;
- Recognition, promotion and maintenance of historic assets;
- Co-operative relationships with local groups;
 - Overseeing researchers;
 - Responding to planning referrals;
 - Creating and maintaining signage;
- Responding to issues raised by park users;
 - Addressing anti-social behaviour;
- Delivering information and incidental services to visitors and stakeholders.

Because this is an urban parkland, removing the Rangers' presence would increase significant risks to the city: of fire for neighbouring properties; of inconsistent management and planning between municipalities; of general habitat loss; of pest proliferation; and of antisocial behaviour.

Positively, the presence of these rangers out-and-about and in a staffed and equipped office offers a range of other benefits for the environment and for the human community.

The Parklands are a beautiful, highly used and busy park, which require significant coordination and oversight, provided by the Rangers. After 30 years operation, this Ranger Model is shown to work.

Looking forward to the population growth and loss of private open space in our region, the Parklands will be more critical to supporting our community, flora and fauna.

*Friends of Darebin Parklands,
September 2024*

August Park Care Day

Despite forecast of storms, the Ivanhoe Wetlands on Sunday afternoon, 25 August 2024 were sunny and calm, but full of energetic people planting. The ground was well prepared by the rangers, with holes dug and buckets for watering. So efficient were the planters, that all the little bushes were in the ground by afternoon tea time.

However while everyone else relaxed, a group of young enthusiasts was observed weeding the fumitory!



Thankyou Ranger Kim for all these statistics!



Report from the Rangers

Ranger Peter reported to the August General Meeting:

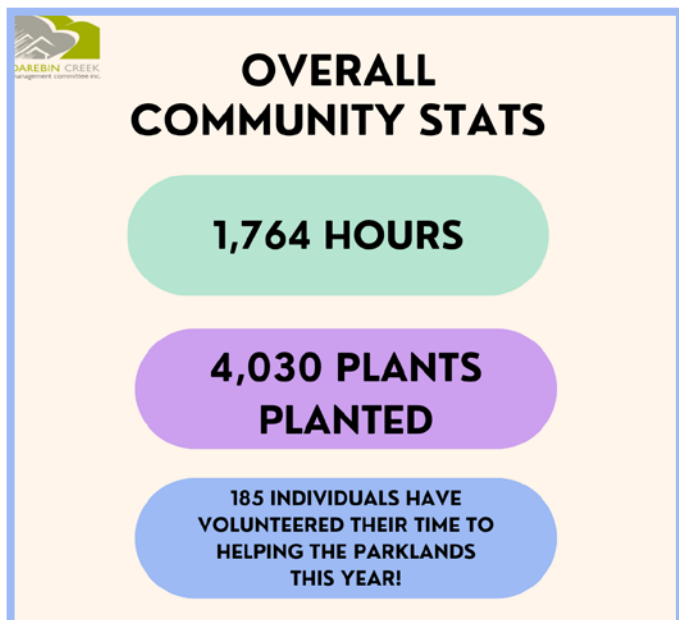
A path upgrade through Zeroland was made necessary by the reporting of a small piece of asbestos. It is not dangerous but Bush Kinder sites have been inspected and are being monitored with the help of teachers.

An igloo hothouse, previously Farmwall, has been leased by Darebin Council in which to grow grasses, and save \$15000 p/a. It will also be used to grow plants for Darebin Council.

The Thursday Crew has been phenomenal with 25 – 28 volunteers each week, a successful community group! Park Care days have also been successful and attended by local Councillors. 84 volunteers have contributed 1950 hours over the year.

Rakali have now been seen in the creek at dawn and dusk. They like the embankment, and the turtles.

Ranger Peter Wiltshire



Nestbox Life



Volunteer Profile:

This is the third of a proposed series of brief profiles of Thursday Crew volunteers. Graeme Vernon (photographer) and Duncan Pitt (interviewer).

Introducing Judy Tham

Judy, do you live locally ?

Yes I have been living in Alphington since 2013.

How did you become involved?

I went to the 50th birthday celebration of the Friends of Darebin Parklands and was impressed with how the Parklands have been developed and cared for by people who are passionate about the environment for over 50 years!

Last October, one morning when I was out on my usual walk, I passed the Thursday group volunteers working in the park. I made contact with the very friendly Park Ranger (Kim) and was sent an email with information of time and place where to meet the following Thursday. I have been coming regularly since.

What do you like most about volunteering for the Thursday crew?

I really enjoy being part of a friendly, welcoming, diverse team who have a shared interest in the environment and who are passionate about preserving the Darebin Parklands. I want to do my small part in helping the environment and enjoy the social connections provided.

Are you otherwise involved with Darebin Parklands?

No I'm not.

Which weed do you dislike the most?

The fumitory weed! It takes over but is very easy and satisfying to pull out!

Do you have a favourite area in Darebin Parklands?

Yes my favourite area is the wetlands. It is a beautiful spot for "contemplation" and "thinking of all the good things in your life" as prompted on the site marker on a rock and it is part of the Spiritual Healing Trail.

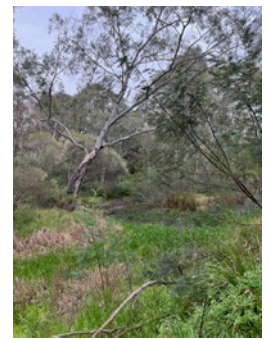
Do you have other environmental interests?

Yes I'm involved in volunteering weekly at Edendale Farm Eltham in the Indigenous Plant nursery.

Any other comments or suggestions?

I would like to thank the dedicated Park Rangers, Pete and Kim, who impart their knowledge of the native plants, vegetation and history of the Parklands and who are so welcoming to us all.

Their hard work in maintaining this special environmental area is critical in enabling the two Bush Kindergartens to operate on the site .



Posters featuring photographs by Graeme Vernon.

FRIENDS OF DAREBIN PARKLANDS

The stepping stones and the fish ladder help people and wildlife. Rangers help us to protect the valley for all.

Don't let short-sighted policies spoil them. Keep Rangers in the

Darebin Parklands

FRIENDS OF DAREBIN PARKLANDS

Both sides of Darebin Creek are united as an ecosystem. The people built the bridge and Rangers care for the Parkland.

Don't let short-sighted policies spoil it. Keep Rangers in the

Darebin Parklands

FRIENDS OF DAREBIN PARKLANDS

A community's vision created this place from a tip site. Rangers help us to protect the Parkland and its people.

Don't let short-sighted policies take it away. Keep Rangers in the

Darebin Parklands

FRIENDS OF DAREBIN PARKLANDS

Leachate from the old tip is treated to protect our rivers. Rangers maintain the pond system for our environment.

Don't let short-sighted policies risk it. Keep Rangers in the

Darebin Parklands

DCMC Catchment and Engagement Report

School Custodians

This year we embarked on a pilot School Custodians program, that saw three schools adjacent to the Darebin Creek participate in restoring the biodiversity in their backyard. The program involved teachers and students planting and helping to maintain their nominated sites, and ultimately to help monitor the sites for native species over time. We recognise and thank the teachers involved in the program, without whom we couldn't do this work.



Darebin Creek Education Program

DCMC's environmental education program works with schools across the Darebin Creek catchment, providing education sessions to students of all ages through school incursions and excursions to locations along the creek and to Darebin Parklands. Students hear the Darebin Creek catchment story and learn about issues relating to biodiversity, water ecology and quality. This year DCMC involved around 3,000 students through the 180 education sessions it delivered to 53 schools, kinders, scout groups and school holiday programs. Our Park Rangers and Education Officers also hosted 21 education activities in Darebin Parklands for university students from environment and engineering courses and teacher training.



Ecological Monitoring and Citizen Science

Our learning over the past 20 years has been applied to further nest box installations along Darebin Creek, which are being actively monitored by a team of citizen science volunteers. In addition to the nest boxes, we have a range of citizen science activities along Darebin Creek that have proven very popular with the community. A total of 178 people participated in 18 different citizen science activities including specific surveys on frogs, birds, platypus and water quality (Water Watch), as well as participating in two BioBlitz events that aim to record the broad spectrum of species over a set period. We have again implemented e-DNA sampling, which tests the water for the presence of DNA of different species. The testing has shown a surprisingly broad range of native and non-native fish, bird and other species. This year we have trialled the use of digital wildlife audio and video recorders, training volunteers in their use and analysis of the recordings to identify the best ways to integrate this with our broader citizen science program. The recordings have captured several species and enabled us to confirm the presence of the Powerful Owl and Rakali within the Parklands. All this data feeds back into our management planning for the creek and Parklands.

First Nations Collaboration

Having First Nations people caring for Country is essential for the health of the lands and waters, and is a key priority of DCMC. To support this, DCMC has developed a strong partnership with the Narrap Rangers, the land management unit of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. The Narrap Unit is central to all our projects along Darebin Creek.

They are our preferred contractors and are closely engaged in project development and planning. This is an important relationship for DCMC as it is central to our support for First Nations people working on Country. The value of this relationship was showcased at the 2024 Victorian Landcare Awards that saw DCMC and the Narrap Team joint winners of the First Nations Collaboration Award. The DCMC team are very proud of the work we undertake with the Narrap team and appreciate the recognition of this through the award.

Greening Whittlesea

DCMC continued our collaboration with City of Whittlesea and community groups including the Friends of Darebin Creek, the Sri Sathya Sai Global Council – Australia, local primary schools and residents with the support of Melbourne Water and Habitat Land Management for the third consecutive year of ecological restoration of the Darebin Creek.

Nine community events have been held over the course of the year, continuing with a focus on engaging the local community while also expanding into more diverse communities in Whittlesea. More than 100 volunteers have been engaged and 100 students from Northside Christian College and Norris Bank Primary School providing over 300 volunteer hours. The creek corridor restoration now extends from Norris Banks Park to the north of Greenhills Road footbridge. As this vegetation matures and establishes improving biodiversity and ecological function, we anticipate an increase in small woodland bird movement through the corridor.



Darebin Creek Catch-up

The Annual Report is just out. Read it at [DCMC](#)

Here at DCMC we love what we do and get a great sense of achievement to see the impact we have on the ground and with the community. And this year we want to share these successes.

For example, in 2023-24:

With help from the community, we planted 15,400 indigenous seedlings along the Darebin Creek and in the Darebin Parklands to help restore habitat for our native species and provide shade and amenity for the community.

Our education program reached over 3,585 school students across the Darebin Creek catchment, who learnt about its ecosystems and how to contribute to its good health.

Our volunteers contributed at least 3,100 hours to help plant, weed and monitor the environment up and down the Darebin Creek.

We continued to manage the legacy of pollution from the old tip site that sits underneath the Darebin Parklands, preventing the polluted groundwater from entering the Darebin Creek and meeting all EPA obligations.

For more details, check out our full report.

[View full report](#)

Frog counters needed!

Monitoring frog populations can provide valuable insights into the quality of ecosystems.

This November and December, we invite you to join us in a community effort to count frogs at 25 designated sites along the Darebin Creek.

By getting involved, you'll not only contribute to vital environmental research but also become part of a community dedicated to preserving our local ecosystems.

[Sign me up to count frogs](#)

Snap Send Solve pollution & litter

If you see any pollution entering the Darebin Creek, use the Snap Send Solve App to report it. It's a quick and effective way to notify the EPA of pollution in real time.

Every action counts toward keeping our waterways clean. Let's work together for a healthier environment! Sign up today!

[Sign up to Snap Send Solve!](#)

To stay up-to-date with what's going on at the DCMC, sign up for

Darebin Creek Catch Up

To subscribe: info@dcmc.org.au



Park User Count October 12

On a fine Saturday October 12, a team of staff, members and friends staffed eight entrances of Darebin Parklands, from 9:00 am-12:00 pm to participate in a survey conducted with Bicycle Network. bikefutures@bicyclenetwork.com.au.

About the Count

The Darebin Parklands Surveys collected survey data of people utilising the parklands, aiming to understand the total number of people entering and exiting the park on an average Saturday morning 3-hour peak period.

Methodology

Bicycle Network coordinates the count at locations nominated by traffic engineers, transport planners, and other transport officers. Counters record all active travellers and note the following information in sixty minute time intervals on standardised count sheets.

Count Summary in Darebin Parklands

In summary there were 1,728 MOVEMENTS

A movement count total of 728 walkers and 212 joggers were recorded during the survey at all sites. Walkers made up 42% of all trips recorded.

There were 321 bicycle movements, 52 trips by e-bike, and 12 by e-scooter.

A total of 365 dog walker movements were recorded across the three-hour period, and 38 'other' users. (Most of the users in the 'other' category were prams, as reported on in the volunteer observational comments.

916 movements were captured exiting the parklands across the three hour survey, while 812 movements were captured entering the parklands. This may indicate that there were more people already in the park by 9am than there were at the end of the survey at noon.

Following the completion of the visual count, the submitted data is validated and analysed by Bicycle Network, and subsequently compiled into reports.



A Moment in History

Wednesday, August 8, 1979

Accent Edited by Nancy Dexter

The home-made bridge

The new footbridge spanning the Darebin Creek between Ivanhoe and Northcote started life in an engineer's living room.

For several months volunteer workers called in at the Ivanhoe home of mechanical engineer Sidney Clifton to build the wooden formwork for the five-metre long concrete bridge.

Once the formwork was completed they juggled it out of the living room and into place across the nearby creek.

A concrete-strike caused a hold-up. The concrete finally arrived at 10.00 one afternoon and about 10 volunteers worked until almost midnight, pushing laden wheelbarrows across the Darebin Parklands to the creek under hastily requisitioned portable gas lights.

One of the workers, Sue Course, laughs as she tells this story. It's typical of the spirit that has sustained the Rockbeare Park Conserva-



tion Group since it was set up six years ago to protect and enhance this little-known park in Ivanhoe, by the Darebin Creek.

The footbridge, officially opened on Sunday and replacing a flood-prone row of stepping stones, is the most recent happening in the park (now with open space across the creek, generally known as the Darebin Parklands).

The conservation group was formed in 1973. Its first action was to stop the Board of Works pulling out mature trees opposite Rockbeare Park, on the Northcote bank of the creek.

Two years later it helped persuade Northcote Council to buy 25 acres of vacant creekside land — the flood plain and an old tip site. Federal money was found for this.

In 1977 a promise was secured from the Premier, Mr. Hamer, for a dollar-for-dollar grant to buy Mulberry Ridge, an old freeway reservation also on the Northcote bank.

The parklands are now administered by a committee of management, drawn from Northcote and Heidelberg councils and residents' groups, including the Rockbeare Park Conservation Group. A nice example of shared endeavor and facilities.

The committee is funded by the two councils but the volunteer effort continues, with thirsty plants being backed by residents in times of drought, and extensive planting programmes (3000 trees and shrubs have gone in during the past three months).

The parklands are used



The new Darebin Creek footbridge was opened on Sunday by State parliamentarians Mr. Brian Howe (left, on bridge) and Mr. Bruce Skeggs.

by schools from as far away as South Melbourne. Educational programmes are given by a part-time ranger and by visiting lecturers on subjects like botany and geology. Now that weeds like box-thorn and blackberry have been dealt with, Sue Course says more money is needed to employ a full-time ranger, and to implement the already prepared landscape plan. If its track record is any proof, Rockbeare Park's conservation group will egg on the committee of management to secure it.

On seeing this clipping, Brian Howe replied:

"Yes I recall at that time that while there quite a lot happening about Merri Creek much less attention was being given to Darebin Creek. When I rang the MMBW about the Darebin Creek they were very puzzled until they realized I was talking about Darebin drain!!!. Darebin Parklands came later and was the result of community action."

Events calendar 2024-25

- November 23 Alphington Community Centre Christmas Market and Open Studios
- November 26, 6.30 FDP End-of-year BBQ
- November 26 FDC & FDP Joint Planning
- December 12 Thursday Crew End-of-year 2025

- February 11 Committee meeting
- March 2 Clean Up Australia Day
- March 4 General meeting (Guest speaker)
- March Alphington Show
- April ? Junior Star gazing
- April 22 Committee meeting
- May 6 AGM (Guest speaker)
- May 25? First Park Care Day

Alphington Community Centre

Christmas Market

Saturday morning November 23

Friends of Darebin Parklands will be selling calendars and sharing information.



Alphington Community Centre

Darebin Parklands News is published quarterly by the Friends of Darebin Parklands.

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Councils United Across an Ancient Divide

The Darebin Parklands straddle one of Victoria's most ancient and significant divides, a frontier that runs through central greater Melbourne.

While western Victoria's terrain is substantially broad, flat lava plains flowing from recent volcanoes (Tertiary basalt), eastern Victoria is a complex of folded old sedimentary layers (Silurian mudstone). In the Parkland, Darebin Creek happens to run along the groove that occurred at the eastern edge of that lava bed, as a lateral stream. Further north, the creek runs across the basalt from its source in Whittlesea.

From its confluence with the Yarra, following the creek north, one sees to the east steep rugged cliffs, surmounted by large, gracious, irregular homes with broad views. To the west, past the area where blue metal was once quarried, is now a gentle slope where dogs run off-leash. The modest homes on that side are arranged in a tidy grid.

The suburbs that have grown on the two sides of the creek are very different physically and socially. But the people have important things in common. They did not accept their dividing creek becoming a drain.

For 40 years the two local government areas have managed the Darebin Parkland as one whole, vibrant green landscape. The local community worked long and hard together to make the place work as a refuge for wildlife and people. They built a bridge and a rangers' hut and they prevailed on their Councils to make a ground-breaking agreement. This meant that the stewardship of the parkland would be done by professional Rangers.

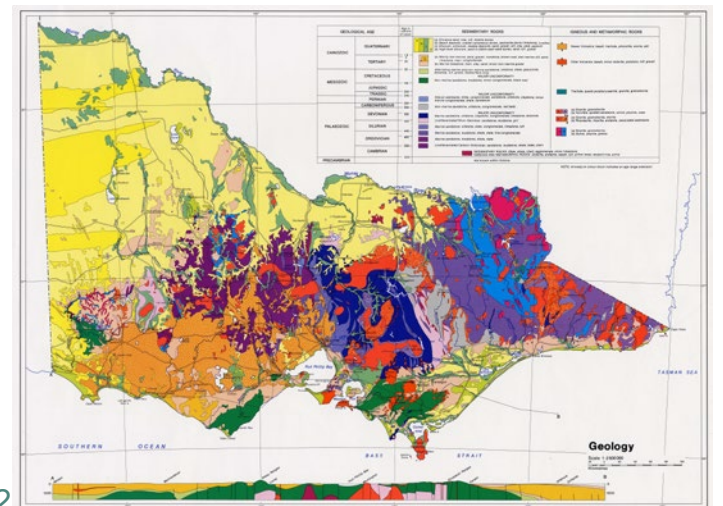
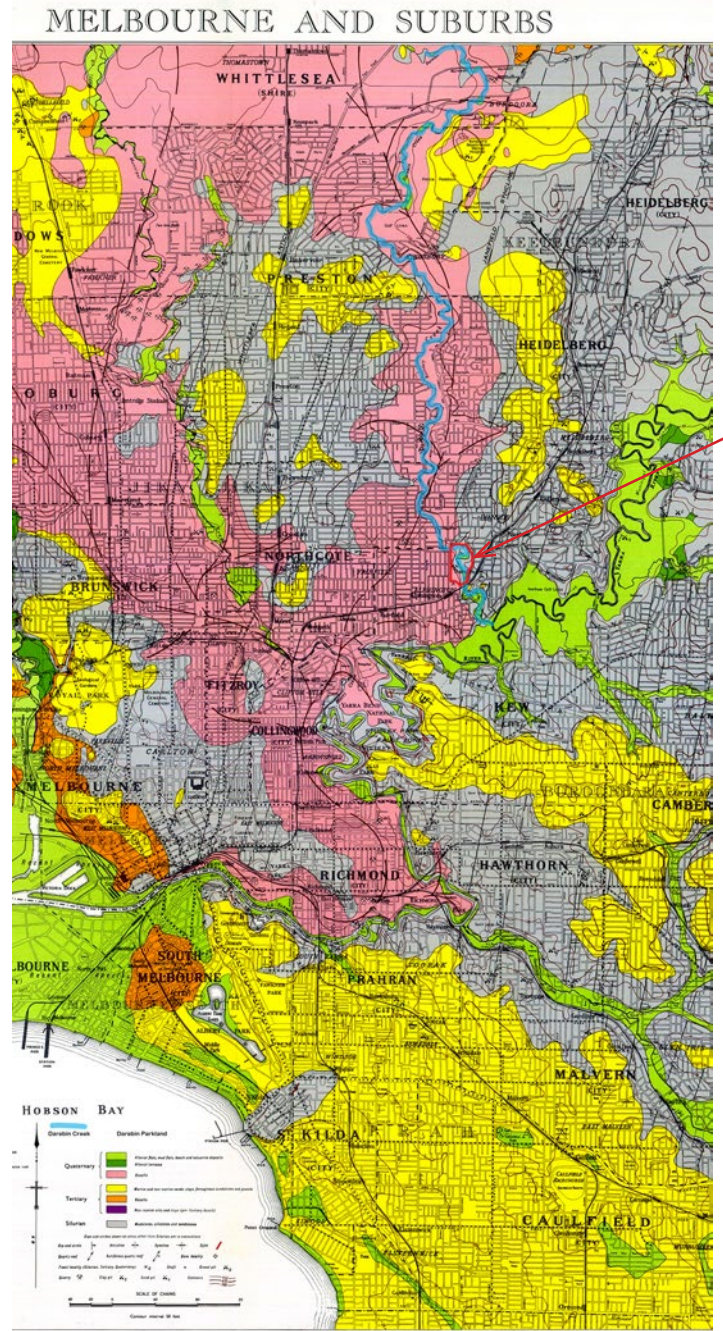
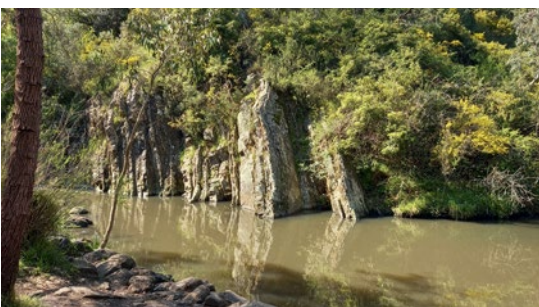
Such an arrangement is unique in the local government context, and it has proven a very successful model. The damage done by a deep quarry and a dirty municipal tip has been remedied by a complex leachate treatment system of ponds, and rebuilding of the site with loads of earth.

The trees planted 50 years ago seem to have been there forever. Birds are nesting and turtles are breeding. It is now so safe and beautiful that people tend to take it for granted.

So friends of the parkland are distressed to discover that their councils are considering re-establishing the divide between sandstone and basalt. JA

With thanks to Bill Cleveland in the "brown book" Darebin Parklands, c 1980.

Maps from Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Victoria, Australia



Part 5 of Peter Wiltshire's Powerpoints Presentation

Life at Darebin Parklands



Bell Miner



Bronzewing Pidgeon



Butcherbird



Long Billed Corella*



Crested Pidgeon



Pied Currawong



Chestnut Teal



Hardhead Duck



Maned Wood Duck



Pacific Black Duck



Purple Swamphen



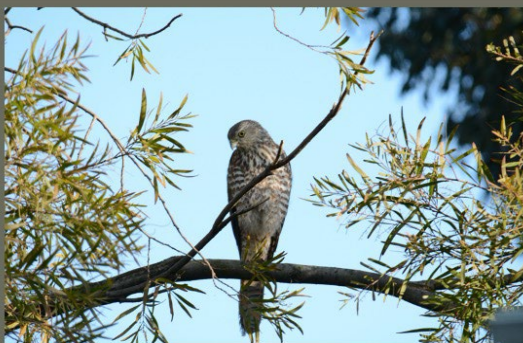
Eastern Rosella



Galah



Brown Goshawk



Australasian Grebe

