

DCMC is funded by
Banyule, Darebin,
Whittlesea and
Yarra Councils and
La Trobe University.



Darebin Creek Management Committee Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19



President's Report

2019 marks the beginning of a new phase in the development of our organisation with the appointment of an Executive Officer, Dr Graeme Hamilton.

Since its inception in 2001 DCMC has relied upon an Executive Sub-Committee to manage the day-to-day operations of the Coordination and Parklands Divisions. This worked well for several years. In the recent past, however, it has become increasingly clear that if the organisation is to achieve its potential and provide the best possible return on the investment of the member organisations, there needs to be one individual charged with leading the staff and implementing the strategic directions of the Board. This appointment also relieves the Board of operational concerns so it can focus on governance.

Dr Hamilton brings a wealth of experience in public administration, not-for-profit leadership and conservation science. He has held senior executive positions including National Chief Plant Protection Officer with the Federal Government and CEO of BirdLife Australia. He has also sat on a number of Australian and International corporate Boards. The Board is confident that Dr Hamilton will be able to provide that pivotal link between staff and the Board so that we are all working to the same script and can help the organisation realise its potential.

I note with some sadness the departure of Alison Breach from the Board. Given our representative structure a high level of turnover of Board members seems to be the norm.

However, Alison was an exception sitting on the Board and Executive Sub-Committee for seven eventful years. During that time Alison developed strong relationships with the staff who always felt that she 'had their back' in times of trouble. Also departing at our recent Annual General Meeting are James Garriock and Cormac McCarthy. In their different ways both made important contributions to the organisation and in particular to the appointment of the Executive Officer.

A development I am pleased to note is in the office bearers of the Board. I am happy to continue as President and am joined by Phillip Davies who has now held the office of Treasurer for 10 years. Margaret de Kam from the Friends has taken up the position of Vice President and Sofie Anselmi from the DPA will continue as Secretary having taken over when Alison stepped down. This greater involvement of community groups as office bearers is most welcome.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all members of the Board and the staff, and to the funding bodies for their continuing support. The year ahead will be eventful and perhaps challenging but I approach it with well-placed optimism that the organisation is on a very good path.

Kim Le Cerf
President



Executive Officer's Report

I was delighted to take up the position of Executive Officer in March. I thought it was a role where I could use my previous experience to full effect but also one where there would be lots to challenge and interest me.

I've not been disappointed. I'd like to thank the Board for their confidence in me and their continuing support, and the staff for making me feel most welcome. For the staff in particular a change in management can be most unsettling but that isn't apparent in the approach of our staff to their work during the transition.

Darebin Creek is a beautiful and fascinating place as it winds its way from agricultural land in the north, through housing and industrial estates, several magnificent parklands before finally joining the Yarra over 50 km downstream. Striving for the best possible management of the Creek against the background of diverse landscapes, pressures, local communities and opportunities, presents DCMC with major challenges. It is inspiring to see local people who care enough about the Creek to get involved directly through the Friends of Darebin Creek and the Darebin Parklands Association. 2019 sees the emergence of a new local community group calling itself Reach 4, after one of the middle sections of the creek around Bundoora and Kingsbury. It is likely the group will fall under the umbrella of the Friends Group. This is a particularly exciting development as it extends the area where the local community is actively involved in caring for the creek.

On taking up the position of Executive Officer the Board asked me to review DCMC and make recommendations on the way forward. I'm pleased that the Board considered my review favourably and that we are now on a path toward redefining our role and strategic directions to ensure we achieve the best for the Creek, the communities of people who enjoy it and the organisations who are charged with managing it.

Having a team of staff with so many years of collective experience is a great asset and has made my life easier during this initial period. DCMC must be offering something worthwhile if staff choose to invest so much of their working life into one organisation. Senior Ranger Pete Wiltshire deserves our special thanks because, in the past, he often had to take on tasks that were outside his experience and beyond his level of responsibility when there was no-one else to step forward. I am pleased that, as I write this, Danny Reddan has recently taken up the role of Coordinator after 13 years working with Greening Australia. We now have all core positions filled and have some exciting times ahead.

Dr Graeme Hamilton
Executive Officer





Coordinator's Report

This year was a year of great change as we welcomed Graeme Hamilton to the organisation. The coordination division has had a busy year with a larger number of festivals attended and education sessions undertaken.

We re-established relationships with key stakeholders and feel reinvigorated going forward. The Coordination Division completed several smaller grants and were successful in gaining funding from various stakeholders and government organisations to continue our core works in revegetation, nest boxes and education. The education program has seen an expansion covering a greater area beyond our catchment boundaries. We reached a few new schools and hope to build these relationships.

Planning continues to be an important part of our role as an advisory body. We attended a VCAT hearing concerning a five-storey assisted care/aged care facility at 22 Wood Street Preston. We supported Darebin City Council, Melbourne Water in objecting to the size and scale of the development so close to the Darebin Creek. Unfortunately, the development was approved. Modifications were made during the lengthy process that will soften the development and its interface with Darebin Creek.

The Shared Trail continues to improve with two new bridges, one at Rathcoun Rd Reservoir connecting to Tee Street in Bundoora and a new bridge servicing the busy Northland link continuing from Wood Street in Preston over to Heidelberg.

A number of projects are under way including Melbourne Water funded *Gums Along Darebin Creek II*, to improve the instream habitat in the upper Darebin Catchment and the completion on the EPA project *Keep it Clean*, to improve the Darebin Creek in the Preston area.

Ride to Work Day was a good opportunity to connect with bike commuters who are now taking advantage of the link to the Main Yarra Trail. Banyule will upgrade its stretch of the Shared Trail over the next 4 years including widening and improving safety for all users of the trail.

The Friends Groups continue to amaze us with their enthusiasm and hard work along the Darebin Creek. Planting days and clean ups make up the core of the groups' work along the creek. We support several Friends groups mainly Friends of Darebin Creek and Darebin Creek Sweepers as well several emerging groups.

To take advantage of our tax-deductible recipient status a GiveNow account has been established where we can easily receive donations from the general public. The site allows people to pay electronically and receive a receipt for their tax purposes. This can be used for special fundraising events and activities and at key times such as end of financial year when people are looking to make donations.

I would like to thank Peter Grenfell and Candice Sexton for their hard work this year as well as welcoming Danny Reddan as the new Coordinator as we go forward as a team and continue the important work along Darebin Creek.

Therese Grinter
Coordinator

Ranger's Report

This year we kept our focus on the reduction of mowing areas by 25% and renovating sites back to bushland with the help of community at our Park Care Days and undertaking continual site preparation to keep the programme on target.

Over 8000 plants were planted throughout the sites in the parklands with our main targets in creating grasslands and wildflower ecosystems.

The Common Myna programme continues to spike interest in other municipalities and groups around the State with DCMC presenting to, Knox, Yarra Ranges, Hume, Whitehorse, Mornington and Strathbogie Ranges Councils. We also presented to various Landcare and conservation based community groups. Meanwhile DCMC continues to assist Banyule Council in running their Myna control programme.

Leachate generation was down on previous years as a combination of continual dry conditions and over development have denied the local aquifer the ability to recharge sufficiently. While this might help save dollars on electricity use by having most of the system turned off, the overall effect is to concentrate the pollutants and salts.

These conditions provide their own challenges to DCMC in the ongoing management of the system in preventing major toxic algal blooms and anaerobic wetlands.

In March 2019 Katy Marriott was seconded to Melbourne Water with DCMC seconding Banyule Bush Crew member Kate Grinter to fill the temporary vacancy. The addition of the Executive Officer to the ranks of the organisation in March 2019 has seen my role change in managing DCMC.

Overall it has been a year of many changes that has changed the dynamic of how DCMC has operated and the Committee's pursuit of improvement is most welcomed.

I would like to thank the DPA and specifically our dear Thursday crew who, rain hail and shine give the Rangers welcome assistance in keeping the weeds under control.

Finally, thanks to my great work mates, Peter Grenfell, Therese Grinter and of course Katy for helping me throughout a challenging year.

Peter Wiltshire
Ranger in Charge



Catchment Snapshot

Darebin Creek Education Program

The Darebin Creek Education Program (DCEP) seeks to engage students in investigating two central questions, what is living in and around our local streams? And how can we help look after these amazing creatures? Some of the animals we examine to answer the first question include: waterbugs, platypus and rakali (What is that Waterbug?), possums, sugar gliders and birds (Nestbox Habitats), and local frog species (Fascinating Frogs). To answer the second question, students experience being a water scientist in the Water Testing activity. They can contribute the local environment via Creek Clean Up or Litter Audit. They can roleplay characters that live along the creek and find out what people can do to improve water quality (The Catchment Story).

In 2018/19 DCMC staff worked with 2,200 students with 157 contact hours. We worked with 29 primary schools, high schools, universities, kindergartens, scout groups and teachers' networks.

Feedback

Al Siraat College, Epping (Year 4) – Catchment Story, Habitat Survey, Creek Clean Ups and planting

Teacher feedback: *Students learnt how to look after the environment. Also, the extent of the impact of human activities on the environment.*

Reservoir High (Year 8) – Waterbugs and water quality testing

Teacher feedback: *Students learnt about some of the history of the creek, threats to the creek, water quality, bug and animal life in the creek and how they as students can help preserve and protect the creek.*

Montmorency Primary School (Prep-2) – The Catchment Story

Teacher feedback: *It was very interactive and fun and the kids loved the big map showing all of the waterways and animals and when we got to all dress up and be part of the roles plays, they particularly loved adding 'poo' to the jar.*



Friends Groups

The Friends groups continue to support the work of the Darebin Creek Management Committee in many ways. The Darebin Parklands Association and Friends of Darebin Creek work at various sites along the Darebin Creek with lots of community events for people of all ages to get involved in, including planting days, bird surveys and nest box building. These events are well attended and contribute greatly to the health of Darebin Creek.

The Darebin Creek Sweepers and other smaller clean up groups have popped up along Darebin Creek contributing to tonnes of rubbish removed from the Darebin Creek this year. The Reach Four group are a dedicated group of local residents who have adopted an area of the Darebin Creek between the Plenty Road and Western Ring Road to work on implementing the Darebin Creek Management Plan. We thank all the groups and individuals within those groups who have contributed to improving the health of the Darebin Creek this year.

Financial Report

Summarised Balance Sheet

AS AT 30TH JUNE 2019

	2019	2018
Equity		
Retained Funds – Start	\$501,059	\$468,749
Add Surplus/(Deficit)	\$76,299	\$32,310
Retained Funds – End	\$577,358	\$501,059
Represented by:		
Current Assets	\$715,000	\$607,267
Fixed Assets	\$124,535	\$151,903
Total Assets	\$839,535	\$759,170
Less		
Total Liabilities	\$262,177	\$258,111
Net Assets	\$577,358	\$501,059

Summarised Statement of Income & Expenditure

FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 30TH JUNE 2019

	2019	2018
Income		
Municipalities	\$542,331	\$531,111
Grants	\$25,139	\$4,783
Interest	\$5,217	\$8,413
Other	\$14,612	\$11,797
Total Income	\$587,299	\$556,104
Less Expenditure		
Wages Salaries, & On Costs	\$353,401	\$372,185
Administration & General	\$64,948	\$56,134
Communications	\$20,849	\$8,205
Parklands & Revegetation	\$41,013	\$48,209
Depreciation	\$30,789	\$39,061
Total Expenditure	\$511,000	\$523,794
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$76,299	\$32,310

Treasurer's Report

The above reports have been summarised from the Audited financial statements of the Darebin Creek Management Committee for the year ended 30th June 2019. The full financial statements and the Auditors Report will be included on the DCMC website when revised.

Auditor: DCMC'S auditor is Megan Young, Registered Company Auditor, Rankin & Young, Chartered Accountants, Rosanna.

Phillip Davies
Treasurer

Our Mission

The Committee has been established to ensure the preservation, restoration, environmental protection and ecologically sensitive development and maintenance of the Darebin Creek Linear Park.

Membership

City of Banyule

Cr. Craig Langdon
Cormac McCarthy/
Nadine Woodridge

City of Darebin

Cr Kim Le Cerf (President)
Alison Breach/Helen Day

City of Whittlesea

Cr Laurie Cox
Michael Tanner

City of Yarra

Craig Lupton

La Trobe University

Vern Steele

Treasurer and Public Officer

Phillip Davies

Friends of Darebin Creek

Margaret De Kam

Darebin Parklands Association

Sofie Anselmi (Secretary)

Committee Member

James Garriock

Committee Employees

Dr Graeme Hamilton (Executive Officer)
Peter Wiltshire (Ranger in Charge)
Katy Marriott/Kate Grinter (Ranger)
Therese Grinter (Coordinator – Acting in Position)
Peter Grenfell (Project Officer)
Candice Sexton (Education Officer, casual)
Trevor Hausler (Education Officer, casual)
Catherine Marston (Cleaner)

Volunteers

Michael Mann
Thursday Crew

The Darebin Creek Management Committee acknowledges the Wurundjeri People as the Traditional Custodians of the Darebin Creek Catchment.

Darebin Creek Management Committee Inc.
PO Box 5093 Alphington 3078
03 9499 4454
info@dcmc.org.au

www.dcmc.org.au

