



FRIENDS OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK INC.

P.O. BOX 19

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Hello Friends.

A small group of our members visited Melbourne on the 20th October to meet up with representatives of the Friends of Merri Creek group. We spent an interesting day seeing various sections of the twenty-four kilometer Creek. Sadly, it has been severely degraded in some areas by dumping and general neglect, yet in other areas some very attractive sections can be seen, having enormous potential given the correct restoration and management.

Problems faced by the Friends Group are severe and long-term - through a recently formed Merri Creek Management Committee, enormous amounts of time and energy are spent meeting with, cajoling and generally "stirring up" five municipal councils, and the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works, all of whom seem reluctant to make long-term, genuine commitment to the restoration of the Creek.

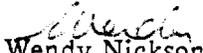
The Cooper Street, Campbellfield area in the northern suburbs of the City is an example of basalt plains grasslands, and the aim of the Friends is to have a section set aside and restored to indigenous flora, including the restoration of native grasses. A variety of flowering plants including the chocolate lily - purple in colour but having an aroma of chocolate - were seen. The Barry Road, Campbellfield, location is potentially very attractive, with small waterfalls and quiet pools, but the local "yobboes" consider it a good place to dump cars over the escarpment. It was indeed sad to see at least ten rusting car bodies in and near the creek from our high viewing spot. On a brighter note, this particular section is earmarked for a metropolitan park by the MMBW, and one can only hope that work is not too long delayed. The last stop at Northcote was a small MMBW park which had originally been a depot with bare earthworks, now transformed by the planting of indigenous flora in 1987. The success and growth rate in 4 years is remarkable, especially as the area floods on average twice per winter; it shows that careful initial planting with protection for the seedlings really is worthwhile.

The Friends of Merri Creek are to be congratulated on maintaining pressure on public authorities over the last decade, in the face of a daunting task. We wish them well, and appreciate our problems (feral goats, blackberries, purple verbena and all!) are fairly minor in comparison. We have extended an open invitation for a reciprocal visit.

The "Rotary" Club have organized a "Getting to Know your Clubs" day at Churchill Shopping Centre for Saturday the 9th November, and a small display and members from FMNP will be there.

The next activity is the follow-up **Koala Survey** and is on Sunday 17th November. Meet at 1.30pm at the Fosters Gully carpark. As good a turnout as the September survey would be really great, so hope to see lots of you there! A busy time is coming up for all, so also note on your calendar Sunday December 15th when we are having an evening BBQ (BYO meat and drinks, plus a salad OR sweet to share) as the last activity for the year; 7.00pm start at the Fosters Gully Carpark. There will be a spotlight walk after the eats, for those interested.

By for now,


Wendy Nickson