

## **Friends of Williamstown Wetlands Inc**

### **President's Report 2018**

We have had another successful year of planting and maintenance in the areas under our care, cooperating with (and supported by) Hobsons Bay City Council and parks Victoria, and participating in state and national environment programmes. Attendance at our workdays has increased and we have signed up some new members.

We continue to get valuable support from Hobsons Bay rangers for activities carried out in their area of responsibility – that is north of the lakes and in the Paisley-Challis Wetland. Parks Victoria staff have also been helping us to plant on the south side of the second lake. While these may seem like random events, they are part of the five-year planting schedule drawn up by Richard Leppitt, nominating species and locations where we can plant typically 300 plants on a Sunday morning workday. Students at North Williamstown Primary School showed interest in what we are doing at Jawbone and I was happy to meet with them – it's my old school! – and to welcome some of them (with parents) to a recent workday. Parks Victoria are also providing funding for replacement of the signs on the boardwalk, something being done in conjunction with cooperation of the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary Care Group.

As we have done for many years now in early March, we joined in the national Clean Up Australia programme and centred our activities on the Paisley-Challis Wetland. Thanks again to Peter Smith for the organization. Approximately half a tonne of rubbish, only some of which could be transferred to the skip that Council provided because it was placed in the wrong location and overwhelmed by rubbish dumped by people from the 'fishing village' along Kororoit Creek.

Several members joined in the HBCCs annual Spring outing, this time to the sewage treatment works at Altona, and we had a strong presence at Council's World Environment Day event, held at the old Williamstown Town Hall in June. In May a few of us were guests of Parks Victoria on Herring Island, in the River Yarra, where representatives of environment groups they work with were treated to a day out.

Two local issues that came to the fore in 2016-2017 and continued through the following year were dogs on beaches and tree vandalism on the Jawbone Reserve. Hobsons Bay City Council has a Biodiversity Plan under which these matters can be addressed, but the Plan seldom gets down to the necessary level of detail. Even when it does, the cost of implementing the plan turns out to be prohibitive, although Council hopes to appoint a biodiversity officer.

The disturbance of birds by off-lead dogs running on beaches in our area has long been of concern. It has become clear in several meetings we have had with Hobsons Bay City Council staff that Council does not have the funding that would be needed to patrol beaches and enforce local regulations. Signage has little effect, and the designation as dog-off-lead areas in parks adjacent to the beaches just makes things worse.

Damage to trees near the playground at the foot of the north-south open space has almost certainly been caused by residents wishing to have unimpeded views from nearby houses. It's impossible to prove who dunnit, of course. Council have installed notices and agreed to leave damaged and dying trees in place, but enforcement action is not possible. There was damage to our notice board – close to but probably unrelated to the damaged trees – and we appreciated the assistance of Hobsons Bay staff in repairing it, with the final touches being added by Bill Kuhse.

The Wader Beach project (Birds Not Litter), in which Marilyn Olliff and Peter Smith have invested so much time, came to end with all monies accounted for and a final report provided to Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group that funded the project. As well as making a substantial dent in the accumulated litter on Wader Beach and carefully analyzing what was there, the project brought contact with other like-minded groups in the area and received strong support from the Port Phillip Eco Centre.

The Committee of Management kept things on-track, with major contributions from Sandra Thorn (Secretary) and Marilyn Olliff (Treasurer). After seven years of keeping track of our finances, Marilyn will step down at this year's Annual General Meeting so as to make time for other ventures that she is associated with, and I thank her for her excellent service.

**Ian D. Rae**  
**July 2018**