

Friends of Williamstown Wetlands Inc.

President's Report 2015

In 2014-2015 we continued to work at two major sites, the Arboretum and its surrounds and the section of the Paisley-Challis wetland accessed from the foot of Maddox Road. Water Watch on the lakes on the lakes continued, and we initiated a research study of litter on an adjacent beach.

Work at the Paisley-Challis Wetlands site included the development of gravel paths looping around the copse with its fox den. The northern leg of the path terminates at the round-the-bay bike path that has been rerouted down Maddox Road, and a line of bollards separates the path from the car-park. The development includes a new seat overlooking the drain outlet and extensive planting along the path. The work was supported by a Coast Care grant that also included funding for planting and mulching along the Goat Track by students from the adjacent campus of Williamstown High School. Students from St Mary's primary school joined in one workday at the Arboretum and also helped showcase the area to a party of delegates to the national Landcare conference when they visited the Jawbone area in September.

A grant was received from the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group for a study of litter on Wader Beach. Results of monthly waste counts on a series of experimental sites have been compiled by the Port Phillip Ecocentre and a final report has been prepared. The Jawbone Marine Sanctuary Care Group and Friends of Greenwich Bay also participated in this work and volunteers from SCAB Duty and the Beach Patrol group collected quantities of litter from further along the beach. The project was timed so as to cause minimal disturbance to migratory birds and care was taken with sensitive vegetation. Support for this project was also received from Hobsons Bay Council and Parks Victoria. We were pleased to be able to 'export' the methodology developed for Wader Beach to the Yarra River embankment where Friends of Greenwich Bay conducted a litter study. Their data were added to the final report.

The arrangement for Saltwater Flora to operate in the grounds of the Bayview campus of the High School came to an end in the Spring of 2013. Richard Leppitt has arranged alternative sources of indigenous plants for us but we no longer have access to storage space but will be able to meet at the school. Some equipment is stored now at the Parks Victoria site on Nelson Place. Another disappointment, but again one that will not have more widespread impacts, is that we and the Council have been unsuccessful in persuading the Stonehenge Group to restore vegetation they destroyed in the vicinity of the housing development at the far western end of the lakes.

Water Watch activities continue to indicate good water quality in the Jawbone Lakes. Members of our group took part in the National Tree Day activity organized by the Council at Altona Coastal Park. In March our group hosted a Clean Up Australia activity

in the Paisley-Challis Wetland at the western end of the reserve. Less attention was given to the Arboretum area this year but weeding and maintenance in the Spring has kept it in good shape. We continue to have lots of wildlife at our sites including blue-tongue lizards (at the Arboretum), numerous bird species and of course the local snake population with which we co-exist in peace.

Once again our group made significant contributions to our local environment, developing new facilities and undertaking research. I compliment the members of the committee for their work, especially the office-bearers, and look forward to interesting developments in 2015-2016.

Ian D. Rae
President