

## **Friends of Williamstown Wetlands Inc**

### **President's Report 2016**

While planting is confined to the cooler months, there was much to do at other times of the year, and our activities included informative walks, continuation of the water Watch programme in the Jawbone lakes, and the construction and maintenance of paths. Work at the southern end of the Paisley-Challis Wetland has intensified during the year, with improved paths and signage and more planting. Our efforts and those of Council staff have been augmented by energetic groups such as the Conservation Volunteers and the Mobil employees on the 'Day of Caring'.

Less work has gone into the Arboretum this year as we move from the establishment phase into ongoing management of the area. Some plantings have failed, while others have thrived, sometimes outgrowing the area we had assigned to them. This poses questions about signage and replanting: should we replant? or should we accept that some of the sites were not appropriate, introduce species we think might be more suitable, and face up to the difficult task of replacing signs? Our response has been 'a bit of both' as we carry the work forward.

Similar considerations apply to the broader Jawbone Flora and Fauna Reserve, especially along the lake edge where conditions good vegetation was never established. Council has established a vegetation management plan and we have worked with Council staff to take action under the plan in areas where vegetation needs to be adjusted or established. We have worked with Council staff to decide on priorities and to indicate whether they or the Friends should be doing the necessary work.

The Wader Beach litter project, led by Marilyn Olliff, was successful in identifying some sources of the litter and classifying it carefully in selected study area. In addition large quantities of litter, including many tires, were removed. The project has brought together kindred groups such as the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary Care Group, 3016 Beach Patrol, Scab Duty and also Friends of Greenwich Bay who used our methodology in a litter project in their area. Litter was the theme of an Open Day that was held at the Bayview Campus of Williamstown High School in October.

A second grant was obtained from Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery for continuation of the project and Peter Smith has begun to examine locally-caught fish, seeking evidence that small plastic particles have been ingested. An offshoot of our local project has been the formation of the Western Shorelines Alliance that links local groups to those in Altona and Werribee.

Clean Up Australia, in March, organized by Peter Smith, was again hugely successful, with 180 kg of rubbish collected. In July 2015, a number of our members joined in the National Tree Day planting at Harris Reserve on the slope above Lower Kororoit Creek. Our financial situation remained healthy, some expenses being shared with litter grant funding, but we were able to purchase a shelter and flag. A substantial grant was received from Coast Care to support the work of the group.

We saw a small growth in active membership during the year. At Committee level, as we have come to expect, our team worked effectively, keeping on top of secretarial and financial business, circulating notices, and planning planting and maintenance. Secretary Sandra Thorn and Vice-President Richard Leppitt, as well as others mentioned in this report, played important roles. We maintained close liaison with Council and their staff, particularly Libby Rigby and Andrew Webster, did a lot to help us. And Council appreciate us: several members were able to attend the Afternoon Tea provided by the Council in early June 2016 to thank volunteers for their efforts.

**Ian D. Rae**  
**24 July 2016**