

# COOKS RIVER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18



COOKS RIVER VALLEY



association

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*A graceful darter opposite Ewen Park*

## President's Report

John Butcher

We are all Cooks River people caring for Country in the Cooks River Valley. That's how we in the Cooks River Valley Association (CRVA) see ourselves and our relationship to Cooks River and its catchment.

During the past year we have continued our efforts to heal and restore the river, to develop our connection with Country and to learn the lessons from the original custodians of this land and to improve the quality of life of all those who live in the Cooks River Valley.

CRVA, Mudcrabs and Crab Walker volunteers have continued to conduct bushcare work bees and clean ups at various sites along the river and within the catchment.

### Sorry Day

The CRVA conducted a Sorry Day walk led by Jennifer Newman (CRVA's Vice-President and local Wiradjuri woman) The first stage was held at the Indigenous Interpretative Site called 'Living on the Land' in Steel Park. Here Jennifer offered an Acknowledgement of Country and noted that National Sorry Day is a day that pays tribute to the Stolen Generations and their families. This year commemorates the 21st anniversary of the [Bringing Them Home Report](#) which was tabled in Federal Parliament on 26 May 1997. Jennifer emphasised that Sorry Day commemorations around the nation are also part of the healing process, a process linked to advancing reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

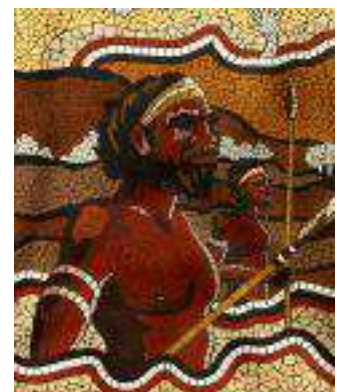


*Jennifer Newman at Sorry Day*

The final stage of the Sorry Day Walk involved participants climbing the path to 'Richardson's Lookout – Marrickville Peace Park'. There an additional talk was given by Anne-Maree Payne whose recent work has focused on the policies and practices of child removal and their impact especially on single mothers of the Stolen Generations.

### Pemulwuy Trail

The CRVA has presented a petition to Inner West Council calling on Council to designate the walk between the four Aboriginal Interpretation Sites along the northern side of Cooks River and the mosaic of Pemulwuy and his son Tedbury in Gough Whitlam Park on the southern side of Cooks River as the Pemulwuy Cooks River Trail. The CRVA also asked that council produce a leaflet containing a map of the Trail, an explanation of the Interpretation Sites and Story Poles, a brief biography of Pemulwuy, and a short history of the Indigenous connection with Cooks River.



*Pemulwuy*



### Candles on the River

The CRVA marked Earth Hour in March by organising the beautiful Candles on the River Event at Steel Park. Thanks for organising the event are due to Ann Leahy, Chris Shanley and Ranjith Evas and Julie Corkery.



*Martin and Ranjith navigate the mud to launch the candle boats.*

### Anzac Day

CRVA members assisted with the ANZAC Day event organised by the Gallipoli Centenary Peace Campaign at Richardson's Lookout Marrickville Peace Park. The event acknowledged the Frontier Wars fought on Australian soil against First Nation People.

### Local Development

The CRVA has made submissions to local and state government authorities concerning the future of Canterbury Racecourse and the implications of the proposed developments in the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor. The CRVA has repeatedly submitted that development within the Cooks River catchment should respect the ecology of the catchment and especially the riparian zone of the river. All development needs to respect Country. CRVA committee member Gareth Wreford prepared many of the submissions.



*Anzac Day at Richardson's Lookout*

CRVA member Peter Munro represents the CRVA on the Advisory Group for the Cooks River Catchment Coastal Management Plan and CRVA members have been active on the Greenway Committee and in the process of developing the Plan of Management for Marrickville golf course.

### **Ewen Park Community Building**

Nadia Wheatley and Peter Munro have continued the long battle to urge Canterbury/Bankstown Council to implement the plan of management for Ewen Park especially with regard to the proposed riverside community building.

### **Guest Speakers**

The CRVA general meetings have featured interesting and informative presentations by guest speakers. Rod Kerr from Sydney Water gave us an update on developments regarding Cooks River water quality; local resident Andy Kissane read some of his own poems; CRVA committee member Martin Puchert's presentation was about Sydney's marine life and fellow CRVA committee member Barney Solomon informed us about boating on the river.

The CRVA also organised a launch of *"River Dreams the people and landscape of the Cooks River"* a book written by CRVA member Ian Tyrrell Emeritus Professor of History at UNSW.

The CRVA very much appreciated the donation by Jennifer Kent of the book *"Survey Techniques for Citizen Scientists"*.

### **Cooks River Alliance**

Sue Burton and Caterina Fraga Matos from the Cooks River Alliance have attended CRVA meetings to discuss areas of concern to both groups. The CRVA continues to support the work of the Cooks River Alliance.

### **Social Media**

CRVA publicity officer Ann Leahy continues to maintain the CRVA Facebook page and Ranjith Evas manages Facebook for the Mudcrabs. Ann was also responsible for the production of this annual report.

The CRVA is an incorporated organisation and has provided insurance cover for Mudcrabs work bees and has auspiced grant applications from the Crab Walkers and ANTAR Inner West.

Other sections of this annual report will give more information about the activities of affiliated groups: the Mudcrabs Cooks River Eco-volunteers, and the Friends of Ewen Park.

The CRVA is an organisation of volunteers and thanks are due to our hardworking committee members and to all other CRVA people who have contributed to another year dedicated to achieving the CRVA goal of restoring Cooks River to health.

### **CRVA committee for 2017/18**

President	John Butcher
Vice-president	Jennifer Newman
Secretary	Julie Corkery
Treasurer	Chris Shanley
Public officer	Chris Shanley
Publicity officer	Ann Leahy
Committee members	Ranjith Evas Barney Solomon Garth Wreford Martin Puchert

John Butcher  
CRVA president  
August 2018

## Mudcrabs Report

Ranjith Evas

Last year in August Men of Trees wound up their operations and transferred their remaining funds to CRVA with the condition that it will be predominantly used for the site at Rosedale Reserve. The last remaining signage about Men of the Trees that was vandalised was repaired, thanks to Linda Eisler who coordinated it after I raised it with her.



*Men of the trees sign, before and after repair*

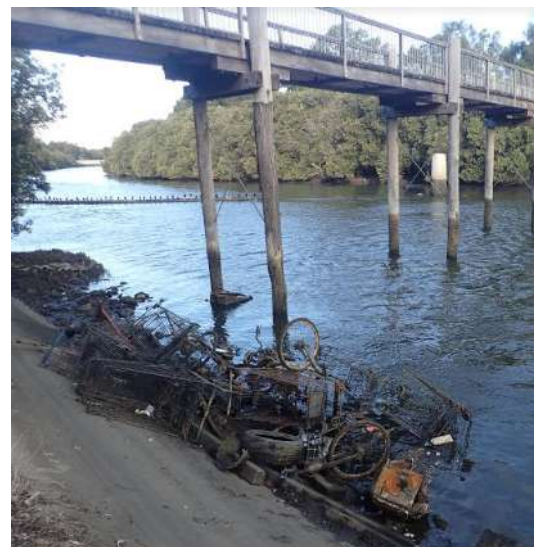
One of our very active Mudcrabs, Martin Puchert came up with the idea of Crab Walking. Interested volunteers would collect rubbish in their streets before a rain event will take it to the Cooks River. After getting funding from Inner West council, about 50 volunteers have collected close to 500 bags of rubbish from the streets which would have flown down into Cooks River. Well done Martin Puchert and all the volunteers involved.

First of December, the much-awaited container deposit scheme started in NSW and is now known as Return and Earn scheme. Mudcrabs and CRVA campaigned tirelessly to get this scheme up and running. We are yet to see a significant reduction in plastic bottles in the river and the scheme continues to be less effective due to lack of recycling facilities close to many of us. We can only hope that these will be ironed out and scheme will be successful in reducing plastic bottle pollution.

Other than plastic bottles, shopping trolleys and other general rubbish, a new curse hit the Cooks River recently. The share bike scheme which should have worked well was destroyed by vandals throwing them into our waterways. A small team of Mudcrabs recovered 10 share bikes from our river. The novelty of throwing bikes into the river is wearing out and seems to have stopped for now.



*Share bikes removed from the river by Mudcrabs, still useable (above)  
Bogged and broken bikes removed by Sydney Water (right).*





Professor Ian Tyrell's book *"River Dreams – The people and landscape of the Cooks River"* was launched at Gleebooks and was attended by many of our members. It was good to have our river's history preserved in a book for future generations.

The Mudcrabs and CRVA celebrated Earth Hour this year by bringing back our popular candles in the river event. This was a successful event attended by many families and children in the area. Special thanks to CRVA committee members who organised the event.



*Ian Tyrell and Peter Munro at the book launch*

Our good friend and rock-solid supporter at council, Nell Graham moved on to study and pursue her career further. We thank you for all the good work done for Cooks River and Mudcrabs.

One of our volunteers, Eva Blanda, organised a clean-up along with Geo Caching Australia and removed lot of rubbish from the river. Thank you Eva for organising it.



*A farewell to Nell Graham*

The persistence of one of our members, Mike Aldridge has finally paid off. Mike has been coordinating with Sydney Water to get vandalised trolleys, bikes and other heavy litter removed from Cooks River. Thank you Mike for being the keyboard warrior for Cooks River. Removal of litter from Cooks River is the responsibility of Sydney Water. If you see litter in the river, always report it to Sydney Water and get a work order number for the job to get it removed.

New access gates were provided for us by Sydney Water near Canterbury Road Bridge. This was liaised on behalf of us by Catarina Matos from Cooks River Alliance. In a subsequent clean up after the gates were installed in the area, volunteers removed 30 bags of rubbish and 6 shopping trolleys. Steel ladders at the new gates are on the way and will help us to get into the river more safely in future for clean ups.

A new bush regeneration site was added to our calendar this year. This site is at Sugar Mill, Canterbury. Michael Childs is the coordinator for the site and had been working there by himself for a number of years before it was added to our calendar. CRVA treasurer Chris Shanley has produced a good document setting out conditions for adding new sites which was adopted by CRVA committee members. I also would like to thank Chris for coordinating the events calendar dates and producing the document.

Canterbury Bankstown Council invited Mudcrabs along with other community groups for the Hurlstone Park stake holder discussion. At the consultation we strongly advocated for Ewen Park community building to be given the go ahead as planned by previous council.

Finally, I would like to thank our volunteers and site coordinators for their tireless work and contribution to our community every week. I would also like to thank CRVA for providing insurance, tools, funding and advocacy for Mudcrabs. Without the insurance cover, no site coordinator would be confident to run clean ups or bush regeneration programs.

See you soon along the river of Goolay Yaari

## Report from Foord Avenue site, Hurlstone Park

Liz Millen

The dry weather this year has affected the site at Foord Avenue, especially where the soils is sparse over the sandstone at the top of the hill. Sadly, we have lost several good-sized hakeas, so we have been busy replanting along the top, hoping to keep the density of bush that has attracted the blue wrens and wagtails to come back to nest.

However, the new 'creek' looks wonderful. We have done some extra planting after the initial work done by the council, and the whole area is thriving.

We look forward to the next planned improvement at the end of Foord Avenue, where Canterbury Bankstown Council will install a water garden to mitigate storm-water run-off. We are considering the possibility of linking our bush care patch with future replanting east of the bridge, bringing us closer to the Ewen Park revegetation site and improving the overall wildlife corridor.

There has been some regeneration within the site; the magnificent tea tree we lost last year has self-seeded and we are carefully nurturing this offspring. Similarly, the kangaroo apples have multiplied at each end of the site. It is great to see that the site is now maturing and attracting regular visits from black cockatoos feasting on banksia and hakea nuts.

Many thanks to all our regular staunch supporters. This year we have also welcomed several new residents and their children and even the occasional overseas visitor. Also, thanks to the council for continuing to provide a diverse range of plants.



*The new 'creek' August 2017*



*One year on: August 2018*



*Our first sighting of an Eastern spinebill, in the paperbarks next to the site*



*Yellow tailed black cockatoos – now regular winter visitors*



## Rosedale Reserve summary of major activities 2017-18

Russell Cail

We had another busy and productive year despite the very dry conditions. The grasses (*Microlaena stipoides*) that we planted last year at the far eastern end have held on (with the aid of some watering) and most other plants are surviving on their own, some even flourishing.

Our main activities the past 12 months were:

- a) Weeding and mulching around our “frog ponds” at the bottom of sections 7/8, some of which were being overgrown with weeds, primarily kikuyu. We then planted some native sedges (*Carex apressa*) and rushes (*Juncus spp*) and knobby club rush (*Ficinia nodosa*). We also dug in another “frog pond”; we now have 5. The brown-striped marsh frogs continue to breed, although this year we did have to top up the ponds occasionally with some tank water (thanks Hans) and put shade cloth over a couple, to keep the birds at bay and the water temperatures a bit lower.
- b) Towards the end of last year (November/December) we had a group of about 6-10 young people, led by Sarah from the “Green Army”, who provided us with some excellent support for about 6 weeks with a program of general weeding across the site and some planting. They planted NZ spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*), *Dichondra repens* and snake vine (*Hibertia scandens*) lower down in sections 5/6 where the area is more shaded. These plants have done very well.
- c) To reduce the risk of weeds spreading to our main site, we continued to weed the section alongside the Korean Club down to the fence line. The worst infestations have been removed. Part of the area was mulched and now mainly needs regular control
- d) We hosted Christmas on behalf of the Mudcrabs and the CRVA. We had very pleasant weather for this event which was well attended and was a relaxing end to the year.
- e) In June this year we hosted a morning tea for Nell Graham to thank her for her support over the years and to acknowledge her provision of money from Council to purchase 50 long-sleeve “sun-smart” work shirts for the Mudcrabs. They look great.
- f) We also devoted quite a bit of time and effort to weeding and mulching in sections 14-16 at the western end. These areas were then planted with a mixture of grasses, e.g. barbed wire grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*) and kangaroo grass (*Themeda australis*); *Kunzea ambigua*, *Pultenaea villosa* and *Callistemon citrinus*,
- g) In sections 1-4 we undertook some succession planting of banksias, *Melaleuca styphelioides* and eucalypts to replace the *Acacia decurrens* which are slowly dying of old age and to fill in some gaps not previously planted or where other plants had died.
- h) In an effort to improve biodiversity we cleared an area at end of Hampton street which had been overgrown by dianella and blady grass. We covered the area with cardboard and then reapplied the cut leaves as mulch. This area was then planted out with a mixture of wattles



Mulching part of the site

(*A. falcata*, *A. terminalis*). Further plantings of other plants are planned.

- i) We arranged for our annual major rubbish removal of a very large truck of branches, sticks and general piles of weeds that had built up.
- j) At the far eastern end, we put down matting on a section of a steep slope and pinned logs across it before mulching the area. This completes the “taming” of the whole site. In terms of general maintenance, we also pinned logs across the slopes of other steep sections to stabilise the parts where gaps had opened up.

One of our members (Alison) who is a keen birder has started doing a bird count. This is open to all to participate in and we hope to eventually be able to use the data to get ideas about what the best bird attracting plants are - red-browed firetail finches frequently visit the area; they particularly seem to enjoy the seeds of the barbed wire grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*), we have also been visited by yellow-tailed black cockatoos in recent weeks.

As for the future, we will continue with much the same program. Although we have a lot of weeds which are still a major nuisance, we have reached a stage where we have reduced the infestations to fairly manageable levels. Our progress will depend to some extent on the weather and being able to obtain the plants that we have determined to be most suitable for particular areas.



*Working bee volunteers at Rosedale Reserve*

The Rosedale Group would like to thank Peter Goss from Canterbury Bankstown Council and the CRVA for their help, advice and provision of plants. Joy and I would also like to thank all our dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who do such great work. Altogether our volunteers put in over 400 hours at our regular working bees, together with a further >400 hours spent during the week by some volunteers. We collected 128 bags of weeds plus 1 large truck load (>10 m<sup>3</sup>) of sticks, branches and woody weeds such as cestrum, etc. These stats were augmented by the “Green Army” who put in over 350 hours.



*Rosedale volunteers, with coordinators Joy (far left) Russell (centre)*



## Gough Whitlam Salt Marsh Report 2016-17

Russell Cail

The Gough Whitlam Saltmarsh was constructed by Canterbury Council in 2007. Saltmarshes are an important and endangered ecological community that form on the landward side of mangroves, and provide valuable habitat for fish, crabs and birds.

In the last 12 months members of the Mudcrabs and other community volunteers under the supervision and guidance of Nell Graham from the Canterbury-Bankstown council have met monthly to remove weeds, mulch and plant. We have continued our program of papering and mulching to help suppress weeds and conserve moisture.

Despite the very dry conditions, we also undertook a program of selective planting. We planted tea trees (*Leptospermum laevigatum*), pig face (*Carpobrotus glaucescens*) on the middle “island” dominated by casuarinas, in a move to fulfill our plan to create an under-story to attract and protect small birds and other fauna. We planted more rushes (*Juncus spp*) and grasses such as barbed wire grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*), and blady grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) plus plants such as *Kunzea ambigua*, *Bursaria spinosa* beside the footpath.

In addition, now that the fencing around the Bayview Avenue bridge renovation work’s site has been removed, we have regained full access to that section beside the road, so we were able to completely weed and re-mulch the area. The area was also replanted with a variety of plants. A number of large wattles that died from old age and which posed a danger to traffic have also been removed from the area. While some damage to the area was sustained as a result of this operation, this has been addressed as well as possible and we expect the area to recover fairly quickly. We have also undertaken some basic remedial work to allow the salt marsh plants to re-establish on the track that the fishermen created through part of the salt marsh, when the access to the river from the road was blocked by the fencing.

The health of the marsh continues to be excellent with a typical mix of salt marsh species predominately; samphire (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*), austral seablite (*Sueda australis*), streaked arrow grass (*Triglochin striatum*) and marine couch (*Sporobulus virginicus*). It is also home to lots of invertebrates (crabs and snails) which are attracting many wading birds.

This year we were sorry to have to say farewell to Nell Graham who has provided us with great support over the years, including the recent provision of Council funding for long-sleeve “sun-smart” “Mudcrabs” work shirts which look excellent. Nell has left the Canterbury-Bankstown council to follow further educational and career opportunities. Despite our regrets at her leaving, we wish her well in the future. Peter Goss is now our regular contact in Council.



Nell (left) at the Mudcrabs Christmas party



## Ewen Park Bush Site 2018 Report

Keith Foulcher, Sue Bishop and Nadia Wheatley

The Ewen Park bush site continues to flourish, despite the ravages of the 2017-18 summer and the ongoing drought. A small group of dedicated volunteers meets regularly to share the heavy work and discuss overall management and development issues, while Keith's weekly maintenance sessions keep the site in generally good shape on a day to day basis. We have appreciated the ongoing support of Canterbury-Bankstown Council, particularly its environmental officers Nell Graham (until March) and Peter Goss, who have been generous and committed friends of the Ewen Park site. For the first time ever, large swathes of the dianella that provides basic cover for much of the site were burnt beyond recovery in this year's long hot summer, and we were grateful for the extensive collection of new and unusual replacement plants which Peter Goss sourced for us. The brief period of rainfall in late June enabled us to plant out and mulch new plantings of tube stock that included many plants we have not seen before at Ewen Park. One day, waratahs, banksias, New South Wales Christmas bush and a lone Gynea lily may all add diversity to our bush garden, thanks to Peter's help. Two large boulders that add interest to our mini 'flood plain' are also part of Peter's 2018 contribution.

Apart from challenges posed by the weather conditions, the site continues to suffer bouts of vandalism and inappropriate use which add to the ongoing maintenance issues. School holidays posed their own challenge in early 2018, when mountain bike trails and run-ups destroyed or damaged a number of plants. Discarded rubbish has also been a problem, another indication that environmental awareness still has a way to go before it becomes properly embedded in our local community.



*A beautiful winter morning at the Ewen Park site*

## Crab Walking

Martin Puchert, coordinator

For years The Mudcrabs have been cleaning up litter from the banks of the Cooks River. In 2017 the Mudcrabs won an environmental grant from Inner West Council for a project to try a new way of reducing litter in the river. The project was called Crab Walking.

### Background

Litter mainly gets into the Cooks River through the stormwater drainage system. Thousands of streets drain into the river, so any litter on those streets gets washed towards the river when it rains. Gross pollutant traps (GPTs) help catch litter when rainfall is light, but GPTs don't work during heavy deluges. Wind also blows lightweight things like bags and wrappers into the river.

Once litter gets into the river, it's impossible to get it all out. Floating booms only collect the highly buoyant litter at the surface such as empty bottles and styrofoam. Most plastics are denser than water, so things like bags, wrappers and takeaway food packaging drift below the surface without being caught by floating booms. It's better to stop litter reaching the river in the first place and that's the idea behind the new Mudcrabs approach.

### Crab walking

The Mudcrabs grant application was for a project called Crab Walking. Mudcrabs coined the phrase "crab walking" to mean collecting litter from streets, parks and other public places to prevent it being carried into waterways. The aim of the project is to build a network of volunteers who each collect litter in their chosen area, over and over again. Each volunteer is free to choose where, when and how often they go crab walking. Every bit helps. The combined effort of lots of people doing this will have a big impact.

Volunteers are supplied with a clean-up kit and ongoing support. They are also asked to fill out a simple log sheet and submit it at the end of the month. The aim of the log sheet is to help to identify problem areas and potentially plan litter prevention techniques.

Other goals of the project include:

- To increase community awareness of the impact of street litter near waterways. Most people ignore street litter and some even deliberately sweep litter into gutters. Awareness of the problem is needed for behavioural change to occur.
- To collect detailed local data about litter. The data can be used by councils to develop litter prevention measures and test the effectiveness of those measures.
- To provide a convenient and satisfying way for volunteers to make a tangible difference to the local environment.



*Crab Walkers' picnic*



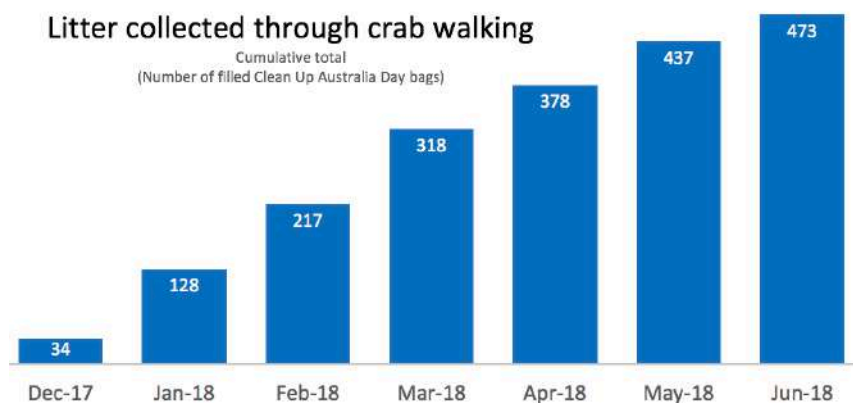
## Progress so far

The full grant funding (\$2,974) was received in December 2017 and used to buy litter pick-up tools, gloves, and high-visibility vests for volunteers.

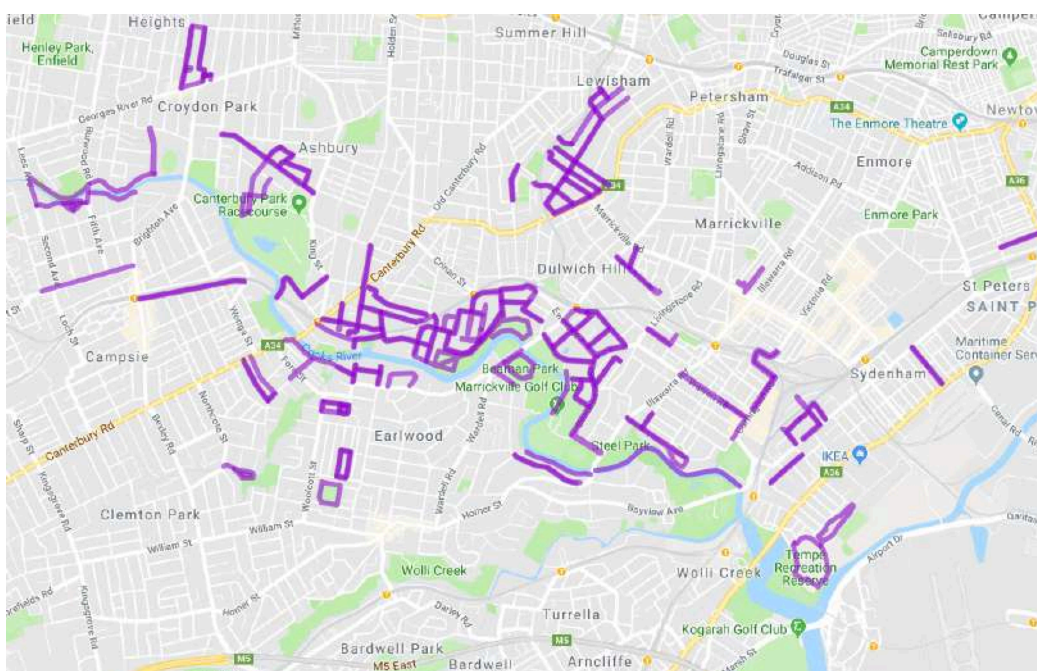
The project attracted immediate interest from existing Mudcrabs volunteers plus other people who hadn't previously been involved with Mudcrabs. By the end of June 2018, a total of 65 volunteers had registered their chosen area and collected a crab walking kit. The number of volunteers is growing steadily.

A total of 473 bags of litter were collected for the period to the end of June 2018 (each bag is a Clean Up Australia Day bag). This result shows that if we each do a little bit to look after our local area on a regular basis it has a big impact.

The container deposit scheme started in December 2017 and is having a positive effect on the river too. There are clearly far fewer bottles on the streets than there were a year ago, but many other forms of plastic litter are still being left behind. We still need a community of action-oriented people like Mudcrabs who are willing to grab litter before it can do harm.



*Total litter collected since the start of the crab walking project*



*Crab walking routes chosen by volunteers*



## Canterbury Racecourse Clean-Up Site Report 2017 to 2018

Pete & Michelle

This site is the original clean-up site for the Mudcrabs. In early Mudcrab times this site was cleaned every month, as plastic bottles would float in on the tide and become trapped in the mangroves.

It continues to trap rubbish although in recent years the amount is much less thanks to the gross pollutant traps installed along the River. Last year Canterbury Bankstown Council added a new Rubbish Boom on the river at Fifth Avenue, Campsie. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be a reduction in rubbish since this last boom was installed. Perhaps the big increase in population around this area has something to do with this.

The cleanups are organised by Peter Tregillgas and Michele Moss.

Over the past year we have had three clean-up mornings:

- 11 November 2017 - 20 Mudcrabs collected 48 bags of rubbish and many large items such as tyres, chairs, suitcases and a toolbox.
- 7 April 2018 - a record 75 bags collected by 32 Mudcrabs.
- 21 July 2018 - 58 bags collected by 15 Mudcrabs. Encouragingly, we had 6 new local residents sign up to be Mudcrabs.

Many thanks need to go to all the volunteers as this site is not easily worked. The Mudcrabs Research vehicle is a great help as well Andrew's trike and wheel barrows brought by Mudcrab volunteers to help carry the bags and big items the long distance to the street pick up point.



*Not the sort of fish we like to see in the river.*



*The unstoppable and ever younger Hans*



*Callum and Andy hard at work*



*Mudcrabs enjoying a cuppa after a cleanup*

## Wave Rock

Peter Munro

The Wave Rock bushcare site in Marrickville Golf Course celebrated its 5th birthday in July. The site is now over 200 metres long and includes some thriving riparian vegetation and habitat as well as sandstone heath vegetation. A dedicated group of Mudcrabs, with assistance from Damon Bassett (Inner West Council) and Marrickville Golf Course, have continued to meet every month. The development of this “wild” site is testament to what can be achieved with persistence. More than 80 individual people have done volunteer work at Wave Rock over the past 5 years, planting over 1,000 plants. Those 80 people have done more than 620 volunteer hours at the site. Thank you to every one of you.



*Wave Rock site, 2018*



## Ewen Park Community Building

Nadia Wheatley, August 2018

In last year's report, I included an email from Canterbury Bankstown Council expressing the good news that the Ewen Park Community Building was "still on the program for delivery", with "construction commencement currently anticipated as June 2018 (or earlier if possible)". Twelve months on, the site is still untouched. So what is happening?

Many newcomers have arrived in the area since this long campaign began, so it is timely to remind people that the site allocated for the community building, on the bank of the Cooks River at the eastern end of Ewen Park, was formerly the site of a Council-owned clubhouse, known as the Sydney Olympic Soccer Club.

While this building (pictured right) wasn't an architectural gem, it had plenty of room for community meetings, plus a kitchen and the usual amenities.



The lease on the former clubhouse expired in 2008, just when the Plan of Management for Ewen Park was due to go to Council. The CRVA and hundreds of community members wanted the facility to be reserved for community use. (The photograph right, shows some of us gathered outside the during the campaign.)



Although the renovation of the clubhouse would only have cost an estimated \$200,000, Council proceeded to demolish it.

As a trade-off for this controversial demolition, Canterbury Council promised to construct a small multi-purpose community building and kiosk in its place. This was a key part of the Plan of Management for Ewen Park (2008), which laid out a specific plan for the future design and management of whole of the park, including the picnic/play area and sports fields.

Since then, CRVA representatives and many individual community members have gone through a process of design after design, consultation after consultation.

Finally, in December 2016, a Development Application was made for a new community building at Ewen Park. Within a few months, however, the amalgamation of Canterbury with Bankstown Council seemed to cause the Development Application process to stop.

To get things moving again, in November 2016 the CRVA and the Hurlstone Park Chamber of Commerce made a joint approach to the Administrator of Canterbury Bankstown Council. In early 2017 we were assured of Council's ongoing commitment, and were also assured that funding of \$2million allocated in the City of Canterbury's 2015-16 budget, prior to amalgamation, would be reserved for the facility.



Again, we accepted this assurance in good faith.

We were therefore completely taken aback in June this year when the CRVA, the Mudcrabs and the Friends of Ewen Park were invited to yet another community consultation. Suddenly it seemed that Council might be backing away from the project as promised and considering the construction of a community building in the Hurlstone Park shopping centre, instead of the promised riverside site in Ewen Park.

On 26 July, Peter Munro and I, representing the CRVA, met with the General Manager, the Mayor, Council officers and Cr Eisler. We were informed of a motion passed by Council on 24 July, recommending that “further consultation be undertaken with the community” on a number of projects, including:

A revised design for a community meeting space at Ewen Park to withstand flood levels and integrate into a newly master planned Ewen Park which will consider regional links with the GreenWay.

While this sounded like a firm commitment to the Community Building, I came away from the meeting with a couple of major concerns.

First, and most significant, the location of the building is not mentioned in the resolution. Why not? Is Council considering an alternate site for the building — perhaps in the picnic area, or in the vicinity of the change rooms for the sports fields?

The original riverside site at the eastern end of Ewen Park is the only site that meets community needs:

- Its proximity to the Cooks River has the aspect that is crucial for a building intended to represent the riverside community, and to promote environmental information about the river and riparian zone.
- It has direct access to the riverside community, by its connectivity to the pedestrian and bike paths, to the entrance/exit of the Greenway, and to the Lang Rd footbridge.
- It is the most elevated site in Ewen Park. (The old Sydney Olympic Soccer Club, formerly on the site, never flooded, unlike the rest of Ewen Park.)

I am also concerned about the reference in Council’s resolution to a ‘newly master planned Ewen Park’. The Plan of Management for Ewen Park took three years to develop (2005-8). The subsequent process of planning and design of the Community Building has taken a further ten years. How much longer will we be asked to wait?

At its June 2018 meeting, the CRVA affirmed its support for a “multi-purpose Community Building adjacent to the river in Ewen Park, on the site formerly occupied by the Sydney Olympic Soccer Club”.

We will not accept anything less!

Nadia Wheatley  
Life member CRVA  
Co-ordinator Friends of Ewen Park

## Landcare Group – Marrickville Golf Course

John Butcher

Mudcrab and Landcare volunteer

This long established site of remnant vegetation has been maintained and extended by landcare volunteers including Mudcrabs. The site is located beside the clubhouse and was commenced as a bushcare site by the then Marrickville Council in 1999. I have been a bushcare volunteer for most of the time since then. The site supervisor is Damon Bassett, Senior Natural Areas and Contracts Officer for Inner West Council. The group has bushcare work bees once a month. It is a delight to see and experience the natural development of the site as it responds to the different seasons and weather conditions and also to see the site developing because of the self-seeding of the established plants. The landcare work also increases the biodiversity of the site and of the Cooks River catchment and we occasionally glimpse the various forms of wildlife that live in the undergrowth and in the fallen branches and tree hollows. The photo (above) shows the recently installed Eastern Rosella box. The Eastern Rosella is a species not often seen in the Inner West but several have become recent visitors to the Landcare site and other restoration sites on the Golf Course.



## Thornley St Sites

Bernie Hobbs

We had 2 weeding sessions  
March 10, 3 people attended  
May 12, 4 people attended  
Small, but heartfelt!



*Thornley St volunteers*

## Reconciliation Achieved

Andy Kissane

In RSL clubs  
across the country  
when we stand  
to honour the fallen  
from that other Great War,  
the unknown warriors  
who fell at Coniston Station  
and Waterloo Creek  
in scrub, grassland  
and eucalypt forest,  
in countless skirmishes  
without date or legend.  
The Wiradjuri, the Bunaba,  
the Kalkadoons.  
*Terra nullius*: lest we forget.



## The Cooks River Catchment Coastal Management Plan (CRCCMP)

Peter Munro

CRVA representative

The CRVA was invited to be part of a steering committee to prepare a Cooks River Catchment Coastal Management Plan, which is being coordinated by the Cooks River Alliance. The steering committee first met on 29 May 2018. The goal of the CRCCMP is to develop a coordinated management approach across the entire Cooks River and its catchment. The first step is to develop a scoping study with all land managers and other interested groups. BMT (British Maritime Technology) consultants will be preparing the Scoping Study Report.

The Office of Environment & Heritage (NSW) will be the approving and funding organization. They will assist with the preparation of the CRCCMP plan and fund projects that arise from the Plan. Debbie Milliner (Coasts & Estuary Officer – OEH), advised that there are significant funds available (\$84 million).

There are 28 representatives on the Steering Committee including Bayside Council, Randwick Council, City of Canterbury Bankstown Council, City of Sydney Council, Inner west Council, Georges River Council, Strathfield Council, Roads & Maritime services, National Parks & Wildlife, Dept Primary Industry, Sydney Water, Sydney Airport, Qenos, Caltex, Greater Sydney Local Land Services, Port Authority of NSW as well as community reps from CRVA, Wolli Creek PS & Botany Bay Alliance.

It is anticipated that the CRCCMP will cover all of the catchment of the River including the original wetlands at the natural outlet of the River into Botany Bay (pre-airport) on the northern side of Botany Bay, north & east of Sydney Airport. However, this goal may be contentious.

BMT will now prepare the Scoping Study for the CRCCMP plan and report back in late 2018.

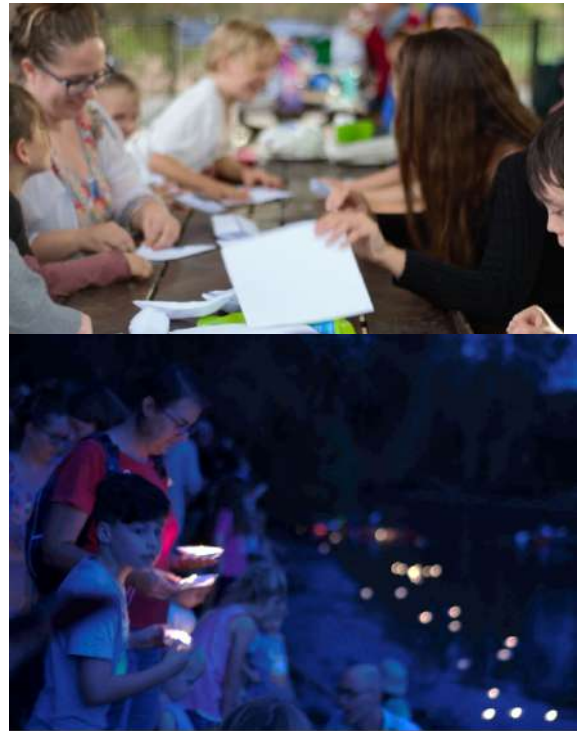




## Summary for Publicity Officer

Ann Leahy

We had a great success this year with our Candles on the River event which was held at Steel Park Marrickville. This is held during Earth Hour in late March and we make little paper boats, dipped in wax and holding a candle and set our little floatilla out onto the river at dusk. Despite initial threats of rain and thunder, the skies cleared just before dusk and we were able to go ahead. Suddenly people came out of nowhere, and the 200 pre-made boats were all used, and many people were making them on site or had brought their own. I was particularly impressed with a local teacher who came along with some students and they'd used the pages of old out of date math text books for their boats. Huge thanks go to the fabulous volunteers from the River Canoe Club, who marshalled the boats and collected them all afterwards to ensure that no debris was left in the river.



*Community involvement in Candles on the River*

These little symbolic boats remind us of the continuity of the river as a transport corridor and a place of beauty, sanctuary and refuge. The river has undergone a great deal of punishment since white settlement, as is recounted in Ian Tyrell's marvelous *River Dreams*, but slowly, incremental improvements are making the river a serene and beautiful place once again.

Sydney Water have invested a great deal in the bank naturalization of the Cup and Saucer Creek wetland areas, as well as other areas, and the revegetated riparian zones along the river have matured into a haven for local wildlife and birds.

Barney Solomon, pelican rescuer and CRVA member has painstakingly put together a detailed study and questionnaire to map launching sites on the river and to gauge public opinion about boating on the river. The overwhelming response was that people would be interested in boating, as long as it does not harm the river or banks. Please see Barney's summary (next page) and the full results of the survey can be found on our website.



*Bank naturalisation at Cup and Saucer Creek, 2015 (above) and the same view three years later, 2018*

[www.crva.org.au](http://www.crva.org.au)

[www.facebook.com/CooksRiverValleyAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/CooksRiverValleyAssociation)

[www.facebook.com/pages/The-Mudcrabs/136923289836251](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Mudcrabs/136923289836251)

<https://twitter.com/themudcrabs>

## Cooks river boating survey summary

Barney Solomon

Local Wangal folk used boats on the river for transport and as a tool for fishing. The Colonists did pretty much the same thing until there was the bright idea to dam (damn?) the river for fresh water. That didn't work but it was very effective at disrupting access to the river anywhere above Tempe for boats coming up from Botany Bay. There were boats upriver of Tempe, but their nature had changed from mostly commercial to mostly recreational, including boat hire.

The next big disruption to boating activities occurred in the 1940's when there was the bright idea to canalise (vandalise?) the river. This included dredging, straightening of embankments, steel piling reinforcing the "improved" embankments and of course the concreting of everything upstream of the Boat harbour. The net effect of all these works was to remove almost all access points to the river upstream of Tempe.

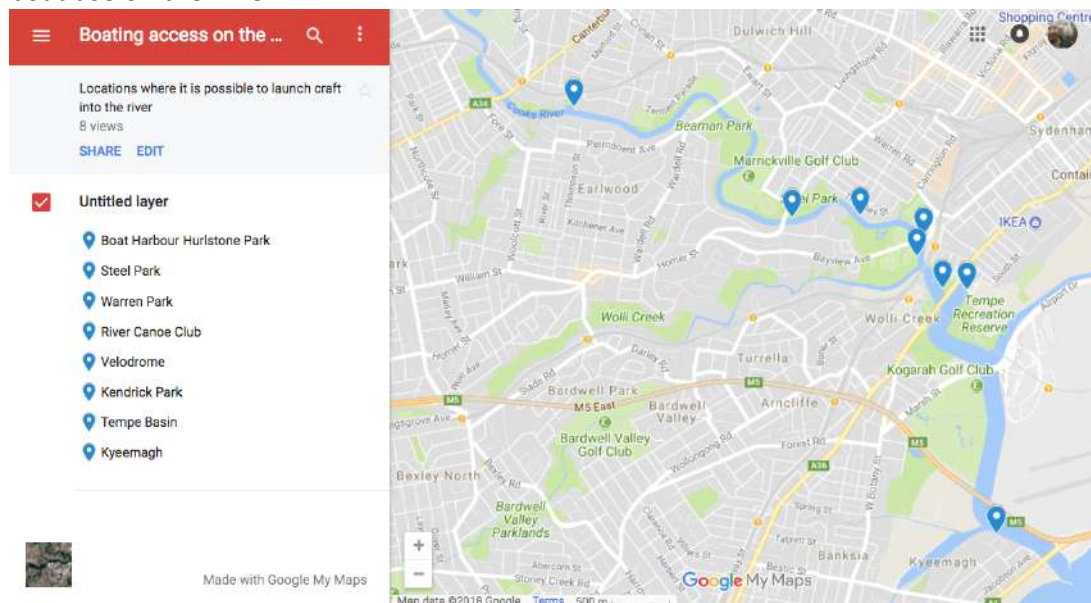
The other noteworthy factor affecting boat use of the river are the fast-tidal flows making it critical to plan a journey and time it with the tides. The underwater obstructions at low water makes it difficult to navigate with certainty.

Groups that use the river in the course of their pursuits include Tempe Motorboat Club - one of the oldest such clubs in Australia I believe - St George Rowers - who now conduct most of their training on the Georges river at Como, though they do still use the Cooks River occasionally.

The NSW River Canoe Club who is active on the river but conduct a lot of their activities state wide. Muddy Creek Boating and Amateur Fishing Association, formerly Brighton Fishos. I've also seen the NSW Sea Kayak Club who occasionally use the wonderful beach launching area at Keemagh.

As you will see in the survey summary, the overwhelming view is positive for human powered craft, mildly positive to neutral for electric craft, and mostly negative to craft with internal combustion engines.

So, the presentation was to spur discussion on a possible position the CRVA may take in relation to boat use on the River.





## Cooks River Valley Association Financial Report 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018

<b>Balance Sheet</b>	
Brought forward from previous year	<b>12,336.23</b>
<b>Assets</b>	
ING account	<b>13,017.52</b>
CBA account	<b>9.26</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>13,026.78</b>
Liabilities	
Nil	0.00
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>13,026.78</b>
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>	
<b>Income</b>	
Bank interest	184.69
Membership fees	930.00
Donations	285.00
Sales T-shirts	40.00
GST refunds	419.00
Grants (Crabwalkers grant)	2,974.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>4,832.69</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Insurance	430.00
Association fees	45.00
Support of affiliated groups	753.58
Post box and stationery	127.00
Events (Peter Munro dinner, Ian Tyrell booklaunch and Earth Hour)	805.53
Expenses for Crabwalker program	1,708.45
Other	272.58
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>4,142.14</b>
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>690.55</b>

### NOTES TO REPORT

- Other Expenditure includes Peace Park banner; replacement of lost equipment; Mudcrabs web domain; donation to Total Environment Centre
- Income from membership fees is up from last year (\$600) but a number of renewals are for three years, which will mean less income in next couple of years.
- Assets include two special purpose pots of money – donation from Men of the Trees, primarily for use at Rosedale Reserve (\$1,900) and Crabwalker project (\$1,265.55).
- Without getting the Crabwalker grant there would have been an operating deficit of \$575.00.

Chris Shanley, CRVA Hon Treasurer, 3 July 2018