

COOKS RIVER VALLEY ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17



COOKS RIVER VALLEY



association

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President's Report

John Butcher

The Cooks River Valley Association (CRVA) is an environmental and community organisation. Its members and supporters work independently and with like-minded groups to improve the quality of life of the people who live in the valley and to rehabilitate the waterways and parkland of the Cooks River. In addition to its own members, the CRVA is able to draw on a large number of active community volunteers through its two affiliated groups, the Mudcrabs and the Friends of Ewen Park.

We are all Cooks River people caring for Country in the Cooks River Valley.

Campaigns in 2017

Some of these campaigns will be the subject of more detailed reports in the body of this annual report:

Container Deposit Scheme

The CRVA has long campaigned for a container deposit scheme to be introduced in NSW and has had representation on the advisory committee to the Environment Protection Authority, which has been given the task on developing the necessary legislation. The CRVA also supported the campaign conducted by the Boomerang Alliance which has led to the NSW state government commitment to introduce such a scheme in late 2017.

Ewen Park Community Building

The CRVA has supported its affiliate, the Friends of Ewen Park, in the long and arduous campaign to have a community building built in Ewen Park. The City of Canterbury Bankstown Council has promised that construction of the community building will commence in mid-2018.

Barton Park

The CRVA has been involved in the community opposition to the proposed Cook Cove development which includes Kogarah Golf course being given exclusive use of public crown land (65 hectares of Barton Park) with serious negative impact on the Landing Lights and Spring St wetlands.

Canterbury Racecourse

The CRVA has diligently pursued the issue of the future of Canterbury Racecourse in the context of its relation to Cooks River and the need for public open space.

The Sydenham – Bankstown rail corridor

The proposed metro line and extensive development along this corridor has been opposed by the local community and CRVA has supported and been involved in this opposition.

Tagged Trees

CRVA members raised concerns and took action in opposition to the extensive tagging and possible removal of hundreds of trees within the oil pipeline easement along the Cooks river.



Fatima Island

The CRVA has continued to lobby relevant government bodies in order to preserve this iconic island.

Cooks River Alliance

Forced council amalgamations have had a destabilising impact on the composition and function of the Alliance. The CRVA has continued to support the Alliance and the necessity of councils within the Cooks River catchment working together through the Alliance in order to address the river as an entire ecosystem.



Shrinking Fatima Island

Water quality testing

The CRVA is no longer doing regular water quality testing at sites along the river. However, the CRVA expresses its gratitude to Julie O'Connor who has for 10 years regularly tested water quality at a site at the River Canoe Club at Tempe. Julie has recently retired from her testing regime and her service to the CRVA and Cooks River is much appreciated.

The Cooks River Valley Association has supported local community groups in the Cooks River Valley in their concerns about proposed developments which negatively impact both the river ecology and the welfare of the Cooks River community.

Events in 2017

The 2016 CRVA annual general meeting featured a presentation by Doug Benson entitled *Reflections on the Cooks River - observations over 20years*. Doug co-authored the book *Missing Jigsaw Pieces. The Bush plants of the Cooks River Valley*.

February general meeting featured a presentation by Daniel Cunningham and Ann-Marie Mitchell from Sydney Water about possible bank naturalisation projects in the Cooks River system

The Cooks River Valley Association commemorated National Sorry Day, the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, and National Reconciliation Week with a reflective walk along Cooks River led by Jennifer Newman, Nadia Wheatley and Ken Searle.

June featured a public presentation *An Unnatural History of Cooks River* by academic Ian Tyrrell. The presentation reflected themes covered in his forthcoming book.



CRVA committee

President	John Butcher
Vice-president	Jennifer Newman
Membership officer	JenniferNewman
Secretary	Peter Munro
Treasurer	Chris Shanley
Public officer	Chris Shanley
Publicity officer	Ann Leahy
Committee members	Nadia Wheatley Julie Corkery

The CRVA wishes to express its appreciation to all the office bearers and committee members for their work in helping to realise the vision of the Cooks River Valley Association.

Special thanks are due to two long-standing committee members, Nadia Wheatley and Peter Munro, who for many years have made an enormous contribution to the work of the CRVA, the Friends of Ewen Park and the Mudcrabs. Nadia and Peter are taking a well-earned break from the committee and are not standing for election at the annual general meeting.

John Butcher
CRVA president
July 2017



Peter (top) and Nadia (above right) stepping down after more than 10 years of service

Mudcrabs Report

Peter Munro

For the Mudcrabs

The Mudcrabs have continued their great work along the Cooks River during 2016/17. Thanks to the dedication and organisation of the site co-ordinators - Pete & Michele (Canterbury Racecourse clean-up), Joy, Russ, Mike & Keith (Rosedale reserve), Cup & Saucer Creek wetlands (Nell), Foord Ave (Liz & Doug), Ewen Park (Nadia & Keith), Marrickville golf course clean-up (Martin), Wave Rock (Peter & Brent), Marrickville golf course landcare (John & Damon), Thornley St & Children's Garden (Bernie), Gough Whitlam Reserve saltmarsh (Russ). A big thank you also to all the dedicated Mudcrab volunteers who show up in fair weather and foul to continue to care for the country of the Cooks River. Well done all!!

Two of the bushcare sites (Ewen Park and Cup & Saucer Creek wetlands) are progressing so well that we have been able to reduce the site work to occasional maintenance. Two substantial donations (\$2,000) from The Men of the Trees to Rosedale Reserve site and \$1,360 from Bridge on the River Choir to general Mudcrabs will allow us to replenish or tools and equipment and purchase some specific plants during 2017. Enjoy reading the following reports below on each of the Mudcrabs sites.



Rosedale Reserve summary of major activities 2016-17

Russell Cail

We continued our program of weeding, papering, mulching and planting. Although we have a lot of weeds which are still a major nuisance, particularly madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*), cestrum (*Cestrum parqui*), moth vine (*Araujia sericifera*), turkey rhubarb (*Acetosa sagittata*), balloon vine (*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*), asthma weed (*Parietaria judaica*) and of course the ever-present farmer's friends (*Bidens pilosa*), we have reached a stage where we have reduced the major infestations to more manageable levels. In addition, this year we extended our reach into the section behind the Korean club at the Eastern end, which had severe infestations of morning glory (*Ipomoea indica*), madeira vine, cestrum and balloon vine, to help prevent re-infestation of our site.



Original site

Our program of mulching and planting the Eastern end with *Microlelea stipoides*, and a variety of other plants is almost complete and has proved to be very successful (see photo at left). We planted more native sedges (*Carex appressa*), bottle brushes and barbed wire grass in sections 15/16 (western end) as well as some *Kunzea ambigua*, *Banksia spinulosa*, *Hakea serica* and *Gahnia clerkei* in other areas around our original site.

We also undertook a program of weeding and landscaping around our ponds using rocks and heavy mulching to suppress the weeds and planted more rushes (*Isolepis nodosa*).

All our plants flowered beautifully this past 12 months. Some examples are shown below:



Olearia microphylla



Dillwynia retorta

The whole site is looking great. In particular, the bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*), the paperbarks (*Melaleuca styphelioides*), bottlebrushes (*Callistemon citrinus*), kangaroo apples (*Solanum laciniatum*), banksias (*Banksia spinulosa*), correas (*Correa reflexa*) and *Microlaena stipoides* (grass) are growing very well. Our ponds have seen some frog breeding cycles and the insects, lizards and birds are flourishing - blue wrens are often seen flitting around and red-browed firetail finches frequently visit the area; they particularly seem to enjoy the seeds of the barbed wire grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*).

The Rosedale Group would like to thank Peter Goss from Canterbury Bankstown Council and the CRVA for their help, advice and provision of plants and tools. As a result of our regular contact with the "Men of the Trees" group over the years (some of our group were previously very active members) we have been the beneficiaries of a generous donation (administered by the CRVA) now that they have now wound up their activities. We would like to extend our thanks to everyone involved, particularly Mr Colin Boston from the group, for this donation. 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 over 150 hours spent during the week by some volunteers. We collected 180 bags of weeds not to mention several truck-loads (around 15 cubic metres) of sticks, branches and woody weeds such as cestrum, etc.



Grevillea serica

Gough Whitlam Salt Marsh Report 2016-17

Russell Cail

The Gough Whitlam Saltmarsh was constructed by Canterbury Council in 2007 and consists of small succulent plants that are nourished by the high tides of the Cooks River. Saltmarsh is an important and endangered ecological community that is established on the landward side of mangroves, and provides valuable and rare 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. As in past years the group has targeted the usual weeds such as farmer's friends (*Bidens pilosa*), buckshorn plaintain (*Plantago coronopus*) and couch (*Cynodon dactylon*). We have continued our program of papering and mulching to help suppress these weeds which mainly grow around the edge of the marshy areas where it is drier. This has proved to be very successful and is an important part of our on-going program of weed control.

Further plantings of various plants such as tea tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*), *Hakea spp* and pig face (*Carpobrotus glaucescens*) have been undertaken in areas closer to the river and the “islands” dominated by casuarinas. In addition, we have planted more rushes (*Juncus spp*) beside the footpath to fill in some gaps. These plants are now beginning to grow well and fulfill our plan to create an understory to attract and protect small birds and other fauna.

The health of the marsh is very good with a typical mix of salt marsh species predominately, samphire (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*) – middle of photo, austral seablite (*Sueda australis*), streaked arrow grass (*Triglochin striatum*), marine couch (*Sporobulus virginicus*) – foreground in the photo and lots of invertebrates (crabs and snails) which are attracting wading birds.

Further information can be found on Canterbury Bankstown Council's website:

<http://www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Getting-Involved/Saltmarsh-ecological-monitoring>



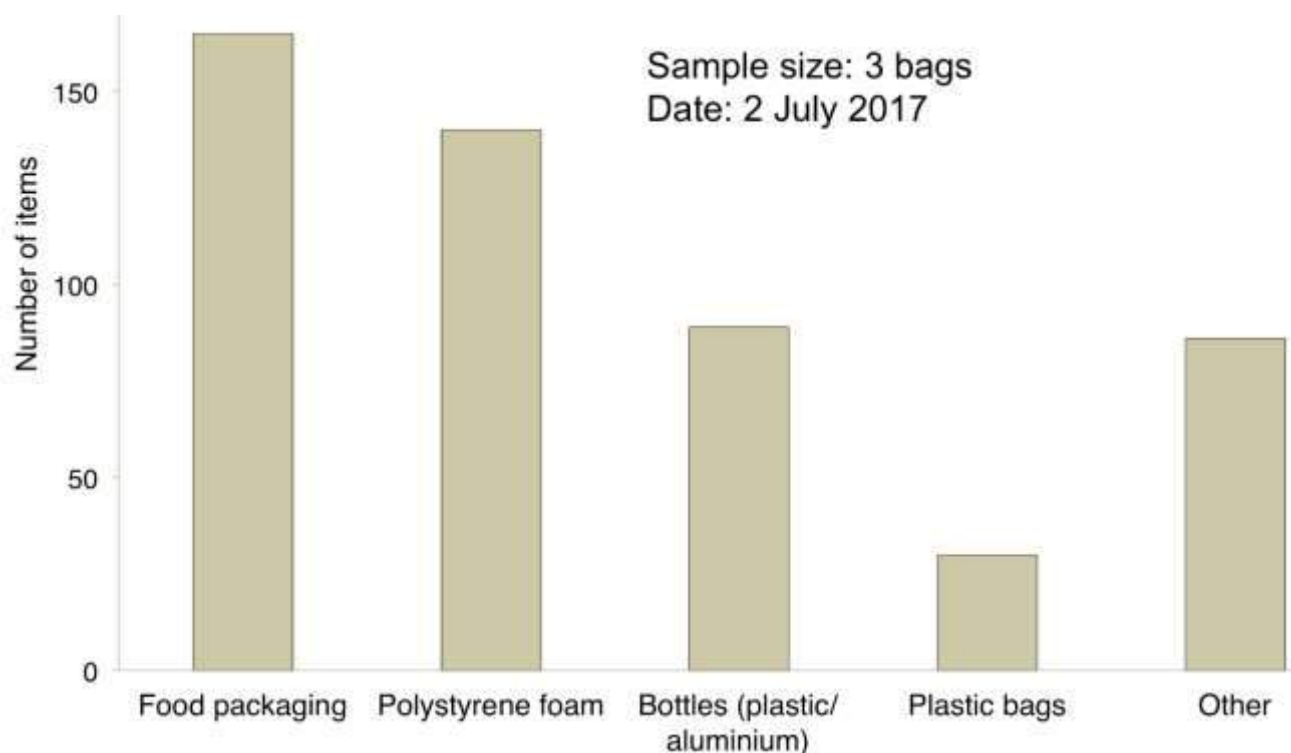
Marrickville Mangrove clean-ups

Martin Puchert, Site coordinator
July, 2017

Mudcrabs continued to clean up the Cooks River mangroves next to Marrickville Golf Course between Wardell Road and the clubhouse. A total of 171 bags of litter, plus larger items such as plastic milk crates, chairs and car wheels, were collected over three clean-up days. Clean Up Australia Day 2017 drew the biggest turnout (49 volunteers). It's clear that the community continues to be concerned about the amount of litter polluting the river and ocean.

Three randomly-chosen bags of litter were analysed during the July clean-up to find out the main types of litter. The litter was grouped into five categories, and the number of items in each category are shown in the chart. The photo shows contents of one bag of litter laid out in rows the same categories.

The graph shows that two most common items were food packaging (confectionary wrappers, containers, straws, cups etc.) and polystyrene foam. Although plastic bottles are highly visible to anyone walking along the river, the results show they are not the most common type of pollution. That's because many types of plastic drift unseen below the surface of the water, which means the pollution problem is bigger than it appears at the surface.





Mudcrabs on Clean-up Australia Day

Ewen Park Bush Site 2017 Report

Sue Bishop and Keith Foulcher

This year we celebrated the eighth birthday of the Ewen Park Bush Site. It's now difficult to remember this part of the riverside as it was in April 2009, when so many volunteers from the Mudcrabs and the Friends of Ewen Park gathered to plant tiny tube stock into a huge area of exposed mulch.



The various bush care sites along the Cooks River all have their own unique eco-systems and their own individual post-settlement history. Part of the wide alluvial floodplain of the river, until about a hundred years ago the area that is now Ewen Park was riddled with creeks and freshwater springs, which still appear every time there is a downpour of rain. Owing to the frequent inundation of the area with salty river-water, there was little natural bush. The predominant vegetation was paperbark trees, called 'tea-trees' by the early European settlers. These can still be seen growing alongside the bush site in their natural environment. In acknowledgement of this environment, this part of the floodplain was known by the early settlers as 'Tea-tree Swamp'. The raised levee bank that is now the main feature of the Ewen Park Bush site's topography was created during the 1920s when the river was realigned to control flooding.

Because of this eco-history, at Ewen Park we did not begin with the idea of re-creating and restoring the natural environment. Rather, we are trying to build a bush garden for the enjoyment and education of the community of people who visit this part of the river. At the same time, we hope to build the Cooks River community itself, both through the friendships created among our volunteers and the use of the site as a walkway and meeting place for local children and adults. Indeed, one of the unique features of this site is the series of linked pathways that invite walkers to explore the bush.



At the moment, the site is going so well that we have reduced our program of monthly working bees. New plantings this year have been concentrated in the western section which was the final area to be developed. We have put in lots of junkus, native pelargoniums, indigofera, and correas, as well as many native grasses. A passer-by donated six tube-sized tall eucalypts to the site and five of these have survived and are doing well. As the site is already quite heavily shaded, no more trees will be planted in the foreseeable future and we will remove any self-seeded swamp mahoganies or casuarinas. Most of our work will continue to be maintenance of the existing vegetation and layout of the site – weeding, watering in dry weather, removing spent plants and renewing paths as necessary. We continue to experience occasional acts of vandalism and misuse of the site, which discourages us from leaving cut or fallen branches and trunks as habitat logs unless they can be well hidden. Otherwise they may be used in ways that damage the existing vegetation.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Nell Graham at Canterbury Bankstown Council who has assisted us with the provision of plants and a very beautiful picnic table and benches in the paperbark grove to the east of the site. Aside from being one of the prettiest picnic spots on the river for the use of all community members, this has meant that we no longer have to carry the collapsible table across to the site on volunteer bush care days.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who have worked on the site this year. Thanks, too, to Peter Goss at Canterbury Bankstown Council for provision of mulch. Finally, thanks to the Cooks River Valley Association, which pays for the insurance for our volunteers as well as tools and gloves



Ewen Park Mudcrabs enjoying the new picnic setting

Report from Foord Avenue site, Hurlstone Park

Liz Millen

We have had another good year, and one which has seen the site expanded by several meters to the west as part of the remediation works by the council that have transformed the ugly and ineffective old stormwater drain into a beautiful new sandstone creek! This gave us the opportunity to plant hundreds of plants into the new area towards the paperbark trees.

Thanks to the dedicated band of volunteers and Duke of Edinburgh students who turn up each month we have managed to keep on top of the more invasive and prolific weeds like turkey rhubarb, madeira vine and cobbler's pegs. We are still learning about the site and what plants will survive where – in the very dry weather in late summer we lost several tall hakeas and a lovely ti-tree; however, the banksias we have planted seem to thrive on the poor soil. Meanwhile it is pleasing to report that blue wrens have now been in residence for two years and seem to be well and truly re-established.

At morning tea after our last working bee in July, we were treated with the song and then a sighting of a pair of golden whistlers – first time they have been recorded near our site, and hopefully a sign of more varied birdlife to come as the vegetation becomes more dense and provides more diverse habitat.



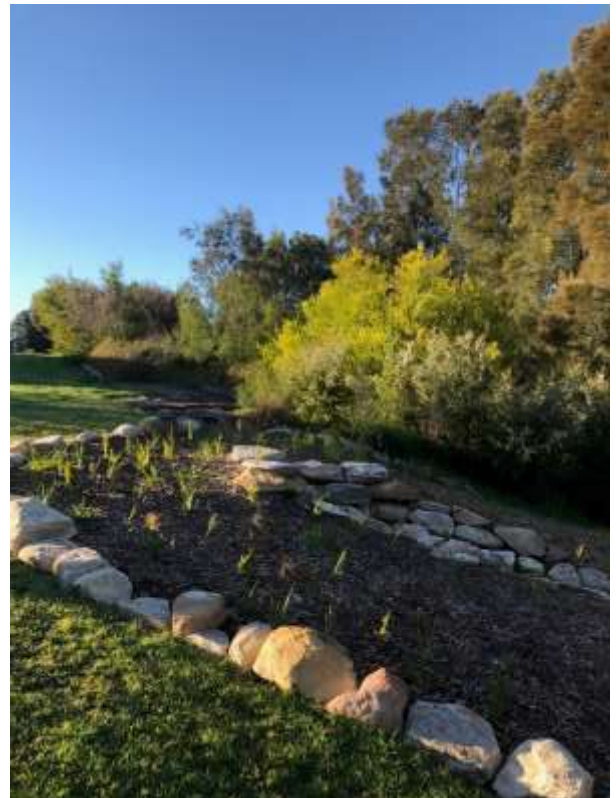
Some of the Foord Ave team



Golden whistler



Kangaroo apples



Before and after the new creek was installed

Wave Rock

Peter Munro

Wave Rock has continued to expand and become a more enchanting bush pocket over the past 12 months. A dedicated group of Mudcrabs, with assistance from Damon Bassett and Helen Knowles (Inner West Council) and Marrickville Golf Course, have met every month for more than 4 years on site next to the River's edge in Marrickville Golf Course. These four images of the site say more than any words can express. This is becoming a magic place.



Canterbury Racecourse Clean-Up Site Report 2016 to 2017

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. This year Canterbury Bankstown Council added a new Rubbish Boom on the river at Fifth Avenue, Campsie. We look forward to a further reduction in rubbish.

The cleanups are organised by Peter Tregillgas and Michele Moss.

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

- 22 October 2016 - a small band of 9 Mudcrabs collected 38 bags of rubbish.
- 20 May 2017 - 60 bags and many large items collected by 32 Mudcrabs. This was a special clean-up to celebrate the New Boom with lunch supplied by Nell Graham from the Council. Also, 10 new Mudcrabs signed on for the Mudcrab's mailing list.

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



Thornley St Sites

Bernie Hobbs

The Thornley St crew had seven working bees during 2016/17 - with some planting and regular weeding on our site.

Our average turnout was 4, with one working bee drawing a veritable crowd of 9!

With Sydney Water making changes to the site, the team is looking to conduct less regular bees here, focusing on weeding every 2-3 months. We have instead 'adopted' the childrens' garden a hundred metres east of the usual site, focusing on keeping couch grass and other weeds under control.

We will continue to have working bees each month or two, confirming the date in the week beforehand.



Planting grasses



Weeding



Thornley St weeding at the children's garden



Weeding on the steep site



Hard earned morning tea at Thornley St site



Another adopted site we've abandoned

Ewen Park Community Building

Nadia Wheatley

The Ewen Park Community Building has been eagerly anticipated by members of the Cooks River Valley Association, the Mudcrabs and the Friends of Ewen Park since it was included in the Ewen Park Plan of Management passed by Canterbury Council in November 2008.

Many members will remember the community consultation workshops held over 2014 and 2015, at which the design for the building and café was extensively discussed.

Over the following year, during the process of council amalgamations, the project seemed to stall. 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, seeking his assurance of Council's ongoing commitment to the project, and also his assurance that funding of \$2 million allocated in the City of Canterbury 2015-16 budget would be reserved for the facility.

In February this year, Aris Dendrinis, President of the Hurlstone Park Chamber of Commerce, and I met with the Administrator and council officials concerned with the project. At a follow-up meeting with council officers a month later, Peter Munro from the Mudcrabs and CRVA was also present.

At both these meetings, we were assured of Council's commitment to the Ewen Park Community Building and café. We were told that, before starting work on the Community Building, Council needs first to build the new Lang Road footbridge, which will have one of its entry/exit points near the site of the Community Building. At the same time, the large storm water pipe underneath the building's site needs to be renewed.

In a recent email from Council, we have been advised that the Community Building "is still on the program for delivery", with "construction commencement currently anticipated as:

- Lang Road Footbridge February 2018
- Community Centre June 2018 (or earlier if possible)"

This is welcome news. With increasing numbers of families moving into new housing in our area, more and more people are using the picnic and play facilities of Ewen Park. We are sure that they will also use the café, playground, and meeting facilities of the proposed building.

And now that young soccer players from the Hurlstone Park Wanderers Football Club are using the Ewen Park minifield for informal training, we hope they will get even more use out of this field when the club is able to store equipment in the storage facilities designated for the club in the new building.

Thanks to everyone who has supported this campaign.



Illustration of proposed Community Building

Cup and Saucer Creek Wetlands

Peter Munro

This constructed wetlands, where Cup and Saucer Creek enters the Cooks River at Hurlstone Park, has now reached a point of revegetation where regular working bees by the Mudcrabs are no longer necessary. So please come and enjoy a walk around these great wetlands to see how the foreshore of the River can be transformed by natural resource management. The Cooks river needs more of these wetlands.



Streamwatch Water Quality Testing

Julie O'Connor, Conservation Solutions

The River Canoe Club Streamwatch site has a comprehensive set of data over a decade or more. In that time, no data analysis has been undertaken to identify trends in the results. With the amount of development on the Cook's River, this historical data could prove important when compared with future data trends. I would like to recommend that the data be analysed by a conservation student as part of their studies or that funds be raised to commission an analysis of the data. While the data has been collected by volunteers, the methodology has been documented and underlies the results.

I'd like to thank all the volunteers who have assisted me with data collection at this site over many years.



Streamwatch water testing at Younger Avenue, Earlwood

CRVA input to NSW State and Local Plans - member report

Gareth Wreford

As a recently arrived Hurlstone Park resident who now coordinates two Canterbury Bankstown Council 'Adopt-a-Patch' sites in Hurlstone Avenue and at Moser Reserve in Keir Avenue I also joined the CRVA and started taking an interest in the various State and Local Government consultations and plans affecting the Cooks River catchment. The CRVA Committee has welcomed the input and provided much needed context and corporate knowledge that has since guided submissions promoting action to protect and improve the Cooks River and surrounding parklands through the:

- Sydenham Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor (and Canterbury Campsie Priority Precinct).
- Sydney Metro South West.
- Greater Sydney Commission District Plans and Green Grid for the South and Central Districts.
- Canterbury Council Open Space Review.
- Canterbury Council S94 Development Contributions Plan.

Specific additional advocacy work and correspondence has centred on the future of the Cooks River Alliance and also the need for the 35-hectare Canterbury Racecourse site to become a new Regional Park to offset rapidly increasing population density and a demonstrated shortage of open space. Along the way it's been heartening to discover so many other passionate local people and organisations all working to improve our District including local MP Sophie Cotsis, Hurlstone Park Association, Ashbury Association, Sydenham Bankstown Alliance, Total Environment Centre, Better Planning Network and Close Street residents. It's our combined voice and shared interests that will make a difference.

I'd encourage any existing or new CRVA members to get involved either by participating in local bush-care or by identifying and promoting ways to improve planning in the Cooks River catchment.



Courtesy Sydney Morning Herald 12/07/17

Landcare Group – Marrickville Golf Course

John Butcher
Mudcrab and Landcare volunteer

This is a Landcare Group, supervised by a biodiversity officer from Inner West (formerly Marrickville) Council with participation by some Mudcrabs members. The site is a revegetated bushland remnant behind the 18th hole and adjacent to the clubhouse. Volunteers have worked on this site for many years and the site has been expanded from the original remnant area. Although there is encroachment by grass weeds (couch and Kikuyu) around the perimeter of the site the core of the site is lush with healthy native plants of various species endemic to the area; from groundcovers and native grasses to shrubs and trees. The working bees take place in the 4th week of every month.



Tagged Trees along the Cooks River

Peter Munro

In early June 2016, the CRVA was alerted by one of its members that many hundreds of mature trees along the Cooks River had been tagged by aborists. These tagged trees were all adjacent to the oil pipelines that run along the foreshore of the Cooks River. Such tagging is often an indication of an intention to remove some or all of these trees. All attempts by the CRVA to get information from Shell and Mobil about their intentions in tagging these trees resulted in a deafening silence from the oil companies.



The next three months involved intensive investigation and lobbying by the CRVA of local councils, State and Federal politician and the media. This revealed that there had been a recommendation to remove 350 mature trees along the Cooks River. Finally, after extensive coverage of the issue by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, local and ABC radio and mentions in State Parliament, the Shell Company contacted the CRVA and arranged a meeting to discuss the issue. This action resulted in the oil companies stating there was no intention to remove trees and making strong agreements and undertakings with the local Councils along the pipeline easement, for full community consultation and the appropriate combined management of trees along the Cooks River easement.



Once again, the strong community interest in caring for country along the Cooks River brought about a positive outcome.

Bridge on the River Choir

Mudcrab Christine Flynn, who is also a member of the Bridge on the River Choir, nominated the Mudcrabs to receive, as a donation, the proceeds of a night of choral entertainment held at St Peter's Church Hall on 21 June 2017. Under the guidance of choir master Gary Smith, three fabulous choirs entertained a full house with some great music.



A total of \$1,316 was raised on the night and has been donated to the Mudcrabs. The money will be used to buy new tools and equipment for all of our sites.

A big thank you to Christine Flynn for nominating the Muddies to receive this donation.

Barton Park (Banksia) and Cooks Cove development

Peter Munro

The CRVA and Mudcrabs took a strong position in lobbying Bayside Council to reject a proposal to give all of Barton Park and Riverine Park, Banksia, (over 65 hectares) including the significant Landing Light wetlands and Spring St wetlands, to Kogarah golf club for exclusive use as an 18-hole golf course. This proposal was part of a Development Application by John Boyd Development to build up to 5,000 apartments on the current Kogarah golf course to be known as Cooks Cove.

The area known as Barton Park & Riverine Park is crown land dedicated to the people of NSW to be used as accessible open green space for the enjoyment of the whole community, not a small and exclusive group of golf players. It has some of the last remnants of wetlands in the Botany Bay mosaic and is a vital habitat for migratory and wading birds. The wetlands also serve a vital function in cleaning & replenishing the ground water going into the Cooks River.

The CRVA and the Mudcrabs will continue to oppose this totally unnecessary development and the “stealing” of public land for private profit.



Courtesy St George Leader



Photo by David Noble

Walk4Respect – Save Section 18C

Peter Munro

In keeping with the CRVA’s commitment to the culturally and linguistically diverse community of the Cooks River Valley, about 50 CRVA members marched behind our banner at the **Walk4Respect** rally at Lakemba on 31 March 2017. This rally was resisting attempts to weaken Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. The CRVA was proud to be associated with such a strong demonstration of harmony and multicultural celebration.



Photo by Ranjith Evas

CRVA Special Community Presentations 2016/17

Peter Munro

The CRVA hosted three community presentations over the past year, each of which gave different perspectives of the Cooks River. These presentations were very popular and well attended.

On 23 August 2016, the CRVA hosted a presentation by Doug Benson (recently retired Senior Botanist, Sydney Botanical Gardens) entitled *Reflections on the Cooks River - observations over 20 years*. Doug co-authored the book *Missing Jigsaw Pieces. The Bush Plants of the Cooks River Valley* and his presentation provided a unique perspective weaving together elements of the plants, landscapes, history and people of the River valley to show us that the valley still contains much that is natural and of intrinsic interest and value. Doug's botanical history of the River carried a strong message about ongoing bush reconstruction along the River.

On 28 February 2017, the CRVA hosted Daniel Cunningham and Anne-Marie Mitchell from Sydney Water to address the community on Sydney Water's plans for the ongoing river bank naturalization of the Cooks River and its creeks. Daniel also outlined the extensive water sensitive urban design projects Sydney Water is undertaking within the Cooks River catchment. This presentation and the future plans of Sydney Water for improvements to the Cooks River were broadly supported by all those in attendance.



Dan Cunningham (Centre)

On 22 June 2017, the CRVA hosted Emeritus Professor Ian Tyrrell, local resident, environmentalist and member of the CRVA, to take us through a history of how humans and the natural world have interacted since European occupation of Gadigal land in 1788, to produce today's Cooks River. Ian's presentation *An Unnatural History of the Cooks River* provided a fascinating insight into modern human impact on a natural resource, resulting in a much-altered river with a significant social and environmental history. Changes continue to impact on the River – development, population density, bush regeneration and “naturalisation.” This presentation was very popular with nearly 100 people in attendance.



Audience at Ian Tyrrell's Presentation

Summary for Publicity Officer

Ann Leahy

The Cooks River Valley Association has been very active in the communities along the river voicing concern and campaigning to protect our precious green spaces along the river which are under constant threat from the rapid urban development which is taking place before our eyes.

Rezoning of the areas along the Sydenham to Bankstown “urban renewal corridor” has seen rapid and almost uncontrolled transformation of suburban streets into high rise mega-developments with no increase in green spaces, public facilities, or infrastructure.

We have supported the protection of the Canterbury Bowling Club site which was donated to Council for community use for ‘perpetuity’, yet which is now under threat of becoming yet another high-rise complex. This unfettered explosion of apartment construction in an area which until very recently was a rural and semi-industrial area is extremely troubling.

Peter Munro, our retiring eco-champion, has been particularly vocal this year in campaigning to save our remaining green spaces. This year he noticed the mysterious tagging of trees along the banks of the river and set about finding out what was going on. He counted more than 1,000 tags in all and noticed that these included rare and mature trees. Eventually he discovered that they had been tagged in relation to the underground oil pipeline which runs along the river. But Peter was not about to allow energy companies to remove these precious trees to protect their fuel pipelines.

Currently there is another battle underway to save Barton Park. In summary, this involves the proposal to move Kogarah Golf Course Club course onto Crown land at Barton Park, in return for providing the land owned freehold by the golf club to a developer for 5,000 apartments. As well as bulldozing wetlands and threatening endangered species this would remove precious public open space south of the M5. Peter has made many media appearances on this issue and is to be commended for his efforts.

The CRVA and Mudcrabs have very active social media sites on Facebook and Twitter. The CRVA and Mudcrabs Facebook pages have a combined following of over 1,700 people who regularly read and interact with stories, photos and events along the river.



www.crva.org.au



www.facebook.com/CooksRiverValleyAssociation

www.facebook.com/pages/The-Mudcrabs/136923289836251

<https://twitter.com/themudcrabs>

Cooks River Valley Association Financial Report

1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017

Balance Sheet	
Brought forward from previous year	11,330.26
Assets	
ING account	10,632.83
CBA account	1,703.40
Total assets	12,336.23
Liabilities	
Nil	0.00
Net Assets	12,336.23
Income and Expenditure	
Income	
Bank interest	165.25
Membership fees	600.00
Donations	3,717.70
Sales (T-shirts and books)	70.00
Total income	4,552.95
Expenditure	
Insurance	410.00
Association fees	93.00
Web hosting and domain name	106.00
Support of affiliated groups	645.62
Printing of CRVA brochure	1,189.00
Post box and stationery	201.91
Events	363.55
Contribution to production of Mudcrabs T-Shirts	537.90
Total expenditure	3546.98
Operating surplus	1,005.97

NOTES TO REPORT

- Income from membership fees is down from last year (\$805)
- Without two generous donations (Men of the Trees and Bridge on the River Choir) we would have had an operating loss of \$2,310.43

Chris Shanley
CRVA Hon Treasurer 11 July 2017