COOKS RIVER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - 2014

COOKS RIVER VALLEY
association

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We are all Cooks River People caring for Country in the Cooks River Valley. That is how we see ourselves as members of the Cooks River Valley Association working with like-minded individuals and groups to restore our River and to connect our community. In this endeavour the CRVA recognises that the Cooks River valley always was and always will be Aboriginal Land and we strive to follow the leadership given by the Aboriginal custodians who traditionally conserved and cared for this country. During this past year the Cooks River Valley Association and its affiliated groups: the Mudcrabs, the Friends of Ewen Park , and the Tossers have continued our efforts to rehabilitate the Cooks River ecosystems and its biodiversity and to improve the quality of life of the people of the valley.

CRVA T-SHIRTS

To enhance the spread of our message,the CRVA has also recently had printed(by Michele and Peter from Substance Design) T-shirts with the logo " We are all COOKS RIVER People" (front) and "Cooks River SAFE TO SWIM by 2020" (back)

MUDCRABS

The Mudcrabs - Cooks River Eco-Volunteers have continued to perform regular river clean-ups at two sites; Canterbury Racecourse (coordinated by Michele and Peter) and Marrickville Golf Course (coordinated by Martin Puchert). On Clean Up Australia Day the Mudcrabs, Tossers and other volunteers removed over 3.000 bottles from the River which were taken to parliament house by the Tossers as part of the ongoing campaign for a state government initiated container deposit scheme.
Mudcrabs volunteers also continue their Bushcare work at a number of sites along the River with local residents as coordinators: Joy Berville and Russel Cail at Rosedale Reserve ; Liz Millen at Foord Avenue ; Nadia Wheatley, Sue Bishop and Keith Foulcher at Ewen Park; Peter Munro at Wave Rock; and Bernie Hobbs at Thornley Street. The Mudcrabs also work with Canterbury Council at Cup and Saucer Creek Wetlands and the Saltmarsh at Gough Whitlam Park. And they work with Marrickville Council at Marrickville Golf Course Landcare site. All Mudcrabs Bushcare sites are supported and assisted by council officers from Canterbury and Marrickville councils and CRVA and Mudcrabs volunteers have assisted the respective councils at National Tree Day and other community planting events. Grants

from the respective councils have provided equipment for the Mudcrabs and a grant from Canterbury Council provided funds for banners at the sites at Rosedale Reserve, Foord Avenue, and Ewen Park.

CAMPAIGNS and EVENTS

The Cooks River Association has continued its advocacy role on behalf of the River;

Container Deposit Scheme
Together with the Tossers and in collaboration with the Boomerang Alliance (initiated by the Total Environment Centre) the CRVA has continued the long campaign for the introduction of a container deposit scheme.

Safe Swimming in the River
To promote safe swimming in the River the CRVA Streamwatch group continues to monitor water quality in the River and to work with Sydney Water, Public Health authorities and other relevant stakeholders to lobby for the removal of sewerage from the River. Our newly produced T-shirts will also help to spread the message that the CRVA wants a healthy river which is safe for swimming.

RENEWED CAMPAIGN FOR A COMMUNITY BUILDING (2013-2014)

Many people in the Cooks River community remember the old white Sydney Olympic Soccer Club building that was situated on the bank of the river at Hurlstone Park, on the border between the Marrickville Golf Course and the picnic area and playing fields of Ewen Park.

When the lease of this clubhouse reverted to Canterbury Council in 2007, the CRVA asked Council to retain the building for the use of the whole community and to include dedicated space for the Hurlstone Park Wanderers Soccer Club.

Although in its 2008 Plan of Management for Ewen Park, Council decided to demolish the old clubhouse, it resolved to replace it with a new community building. Two years later, Canterbury Council's Design Development Plan for Ewen Park showed the footprint of a "Multi-purpose Building", including a café, in this location, and behind it the footprint of a "Soccer Clubhouse".

Towards the end of 2013, the CRVA was concerned to discover that Canterbury Council was unclear about the need or purpose for the community building in Ewen Park, and seemed to be backing away from their commitment.

We immediately began a renewed community campaign, urging Council to commit to providing by 2016 a kind of 'community hub' at the eastern end of Ewen Park.

Over the summer, 650 local residents and park users, who were shown Council's 2010 plan, endorsed the proposal. As well, they indicated how they would like to use the building:

Multi-purpose community meeting place: 401
Café: 346
Place for physical fitness and exercise (yoga, zumba, tai chi etc): 99
Place for workshops (environmental education, art, music etc): 71
Place for playgroups, mums and bubs: 43

Responding to the high level of community interest, over March and April 2014 Canterbury Council engaged a team of consultants and held three community workshops to discuss issues including the building's location, function, size, layout, and security. As well, there was a great deal of discussion regarding the viability of a café on the river.

When the outcomes of this consultation were presented to Council's City Services Committee meeting on 14 August, Council unanimously resolved to engage the resources 'to undertake the necessary investigations to define the scope of the project prior to commencing the detailed design'. Council also resolved 'to prepare a business model for the future commercial operation of a café within this facility'.

At this meeting of Council, the CRVA Vice-President Peter Munro thanked the three East Ward Councillors — Linda Eisler, Esta Paschalidas-Chilas and Con Vasiliadis — and the Mayor, Brian Robson, for listening to the community. He also thanked the Council officers who have been involved with the issue, especially Wayne Cooper, the Director of City Works, and the General Manager, Jim Montague.

While it is welcome news that the community building at the eastern end of Ewen Park is back on track, and we are pleased that Council is now also considering the café option, we need to continue to remind Council that if the Cooks River community is to continue to flourish, it needs a place where people can get together.

FATIMA ISLAND

Fatima Island, situated on the Cooks River between Kendrick Park and Tempe House, is a small natural sandbar with a collapsing rock retaining wall at the western end.
The history of Fatima Island provides a microcosm of our nation's cultural diversity.

Although the retaining wall (including recycled convict-hewn rock) was added around 1901 as part of public works, the underlying mudflat or sandbar is a natural feature of the Cooks River, and indeed Fatima Island is the only remaining island of several that existed prior to settlement. Together with two adjacent islands that can be seen in a photograph taken circa 1880, Fatima Island would have provided a crossing place for the Aboriginal traditional owners of this part of the river. It is surely no coincidence that a significant midden site is nearby, at Kendrick Park.

The island's name alone resonates with two significant components of our local community. It comes from a Catholic rosary pilgrimage made to the island in 1951, honouring a Portugese statue of Our Lady of Fatima. This name in turn has provided a familiar reference point for more-recent Muslim community members, because the daughter of the prophet Mohammed was named Fatima.

Currently under threat from flooding, erosion and the visits of thoughtless people, this precious bird sanctuary and heritage site is in urgent need of support at both community and official level.

The island is the responsibility of Marrickville Council and the CRVA together with the Marrickville Heritage Society and other concerned local groups and individuals have lobbied council to take appropriate action to ensure the survival of this iconic feature of the River.

(information about the history of Fatima Island was provided by Nadia Wheatley)

Following lobbying initiated by the CRVA, Marrickville Council allocated $25,000 to commission a consultants report regarding the erosion problems of the island and to present possible short term and long term remediation options. The Council meeting in July 2014 considered the consultants report and resolved to implement the short term natural option of tree planting on the island and to delay a final decision about long term measures until the review of the biodiversity strategy and action plan for the river was completed.

EARTH HOUR - CANDLES ON THE RIVER

The CRVA again this year held a Candles on the River Event for Earth Hour. This event was organised by CRVA vice-president, Peter Munro, and was a wonderful and very moving celebration of our connection with the River. The event featured paper boats fitted with lighted candles and launched on the River at Steel Park. A local music group added atmosphere to the occasion and canoeists from the Canoe Club at Tempe collected the boats to avoid littering the River.

RICHARDSON'S LOOKOUT AS A PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PARK

The CRVA supported the proposal put to Marrickville Council by the Gallipoli Centenary Peace Campaign that Richardsons Lookout, which looks out over Cooks River, be nominated as a Peace and Reconciliation Park. The area is part of the Warren Estate which was used as a military encampment during WW1. It is also one of the Aboriginal Interpretative Signage sites (Looking Out) established by Marrickville Aboriginal Consultative Committee and Marrickville Council, and has been the site of several Sorry Day events organised by Marrickville Residents for Reconciliation.

richardson's lookout - peace and reconciliation park?

BRIDGE ON THE RIVER CHOIR

The debut concert of the Bridge on the River choir held at Marrickville Golf Club in September 2013 raised $1300 for the CRVA .

CONCLUSION

The future for the Cooks River is very hopeful. The river is highly regarded by the local, and wider, community. In the past the river was much abused and physically converted into a drain with steel piling and concrete channels. But now the banks are being naturalised; rain gardens and wetlands are being established by Sydney Water, local councils and the Cooks River Alliance (of councils) to improve the quality of the water entering the river. It is becoming a River once again and the Cooks River Valley Association is fulfilling its role of restoring our River and Connecting our Community.

John Butcher August 2014

CRVA Summary of activities by Publicity Officer for 2014

Here's a brief summary of some of the campaigns and achievements of the last year. Sewage in the river:

In September 2013 we met with Linda Burney to discuss the problem of high sewage levels in the river. She presented the CRVA petition with over 2,000 signatories to NSW parliament which whilst commending Sydney Water for the bank restoration, called for immediate measures to repair infrastructure and take measures to reduce sewage outflows into the Cooks River. Unfortunately this was not endorsed by parliament.

After the disaster on the Georges River 22 November 13 where a flash flood caused 55 megalitres of raw sewage to be discharged into the river campaigns stepped up by both Georges and Cooks River groups. A report on 16 December in the SMH stated that Sydney Water had applied to the EPA to amend its licence to increase flows of waste water into the lower reaches of the Cooks River and Botany Bay.

We again lobbied Linda Burney on this issue who raised relevant questions in parliament.
I wrote to Mark Gifford, Chief Environmental Regulator of the EPA to clarify this issue and to request public consultation into this process. He replied in writing and said that Sydney Water was not planning to do anything to increase the total outputs of waste water into the Cooks. I also wrote to Sydney Water. Sydney Water also confirmed that they were not increasing outflows into the river.

Since that time Sydney Water have unveiled a plan to spend $10 million in source testing in Wolli Creek and Bardwell Park to identify and rectify illegal connections of sewage to stormwater channels. If successful they will continue this work in other areas.

There is still way too much sewage in the Cooks. After rain when I test the water at Younger Avenue the level of EColi is often 20-50 times higher than the maximum recommended for human contact. I don't know what more I can do on this front, other than hope that measures being taken will gradually improve the situation and jump up and down if it doesn't.

Rubbish and containers and debris in the river:

I joined the Tossers, led by Kate McLean in the campaign to call for a container deposit scheme (CDS) to be adopted to lessen the huge volumes of container litter in and around the Cooks River.

On clean up Australia day we collected 100 sacks of bottles and cans, around 6,000 and took around 600 of these the next day to present to the then premier Barry O'Farrell, along with a huge card signed by hundreds of students and community members calling for a CDS. The Total Environment Centre joined the delegation to parliament (which didn't include myself). I sent numerous press releases of the event, some of which were printed by the local papers.

Ian Kiernan and Boomerang Alliance launched a new offensive to call for a CDS from the banks of the Cooks River on 20 May 2014. Press releases gained front page on numerous local papers such as the Bankstown Canterbury Torch.

Campaigns continue with tossing each month and petitions on the CRVA Facebook page.
After a particularly vigorous session of letter writing and FaceBook protests after particularly bad container pollution in the river after Earth Hour I finally got a detailed and promising pledge from Sydney Water to undertake a raft of measures to improve the river, including helping Canterbury Council to regularly clean a new boom which council could not manage themselves. The boom has not yet been installed but is due any day now.

Protecting birdlife on the river:
In October 13 I was fed up with the dogs and fishermen disturbing and sometimes harming the birds gathered on the little peninsula at boat harbour by the sugar mill. Together with Ranjith and the Mudcrabs we launched a campaign on FB calling for a fence to be erected there to protect birds and turn it into a small wildlife refuge. After lots of community support and letters and photos to council this was adopted by Canterbury Council and the fence was installed in March this year. This is working well to protect birds and up to 14 pelicans have been sighted there resting after their meals.

A number of successful pelican rescues have been undertaken by WIRES with the help of Barney and Jen with their boat and kayak, with Ranjith taking fantastic photos. This story gained over 24,300 readers on the FB page and hundreds of comments and likes. There was also good press adoption of this story and photos.

Ann Leahy
Publicity Officer, CRVA

Introduction

We're all Cooks River People. Imagine if you could swim in the Cooks River in summer. Imagine going for a paddle or sail during summer. If our river was healthy, the river would be a source of recreational enjoyment for all Cooks River communities.

We acknowledge the support of Sydney Water since the start of the Streamwatch program and the current support of the Australian Museum. Without the volunteers collecting data on a regular basis, we would not be able to monitor improvements or threats to water quality and the ecosystem the Cooks river supports.

This report is only a small segment of data collected over a decade by community volunteers. With an extensive comparison of this data with historical data, it is possible to assess environmental sustainability and changes. We seek the support of Council to fund a report on the water quality of the Cooks River using comparative data collected over a decade to improve water quality and the quality of life of the community along the Cooks River.

While the results are collected by community volunteers, every effort is made to ensure uniformity of methods and measurements. The results are intended to complement other data collected by water quality testing facilities. The results can also be used to identify local issues of concern so that can help assess the efforts of council supported remediation projects.

Two sites are compared in this report during the 2013-2014 financial year: The downstream site near the River Canoe Club located at Richardson Crescent and upstream at Younger Avenue because these are the two active sites for Streamwatch monitoring purposes during the year. A third site at Kendrick Park was assessed for inclusion in the Streamwatch programme because of its proximity to the Pacific Highway and recreational use by families.

The graphs which follow record the highest and lowest readings. In addition the results include the average results of four sessions at Richardson Crescent and five or six sessions at Younger Avenue. The E-coli results for Younger Avenue were unavailable to include here.

Aim

Our aim with testing each site is to establish a baseline set of data across a range of conditions. Deviations from these collected values can alert us to pollution events. Long term trends toward improvement or deterioration can also be observed.

Results

pH

The optimum pH to support the proliferation of aquatic life is 6.5 to 8.5. The River Canoe Club site at Richardson Crescent is tidal and reflects the pH of seawater (8) while further upstream, the site at Younger Avenue although tidal has a higher percentage of freshwater (rainwater PH 5-6) .

Turbidity

Turbidity reduces penetration of light and the clarity of the water. It is a subjective evaluation of water quality. The water at Younger Avenue is more turbid than the River Canoe club site where the water is flushed more regularly by the tide.

Electrical Conductivity

Electrical conductivity is an indirect measure of salinity. These two sites are tidal, so salinity varies as the mix of fresh and salt water changes. With the incoming tide electrical conductivity is higher than the outgoing tide. Richardson Crescent is closer to Botany Bay, so the salinity of this site will always be greater than upstream at Younger Avenue.

Available Phosphate and Dissolved Oxygen

Soluble phosphates provide nutrients to aquatic plants. Excess levels of available phosphate promote algal blooms. This in turn reduces dissolved oxygen (DO) available for marine life. Our results show that dissolved oxygen is generally very low at these two sites. Even the highest dissolved oxygen reading is below recommended guidelines (85%).

Temperature

Aquatic organisms prefer temperature ranges which vary with each species. Water temperatures range from 15^0 during winter to 24^0 Celsius in summer at the two sites. Temperature also influences the amount of dissolved oxygen.

E-Coli

The short-term and long-term E-coli counts for Richardson Crescent are compared overleaf. The results collected during the year reflect long-term trends covering the period (2011-2012). Higher rainfall generally results in higher e-coli levels in the river. During the year, e-coli levels at Richardson Crescent reached 300 CFU/100mls on one occasion making the area unsafe for swimming according

to data collected since 2011 courtesy of the Cooks River Valley Association, provided by Gayle Adams.

Conclusion

Good water quality improves human recreational activities, the biology and ecology of the river. Poor water quality has the opposite effect. As stated at the beginning of this report, a comprehensive analysis of the data collected by Streamwatch volunteers is needed to

establish long-term trends, map pollution events and plan remediation measures for the future health of the Cook's River.

Finally I acknowledge the efforts of the following volunteers during the year:
Pauline Bleach
Charis and Mary
William Domanski
Jonathan Dowling
Anne Leahy
Julie O'Connor (Author)

StreamWatch water testing kit

Rosedale Reserve: Summary of major activities in 2013-2014

The Rosedale group consists of a core of 10-15 dedicated regulars. Our routine activities are centred around removing cestrum, weeding farmer's friends/cobblers pegs (Bidens pilosa), asthma weed and papering and mulching the areas that we cleared, ready for planting. Our other task has been removing dead wattle trees, many of which have reached the end of their natural life (it is now over 10 years since Rosedale was first planted). The highlights of the past year have been:

- Early August 2013, we dug frog ponds (children plastic sand pits – minus the children) into the wet ground below section 6 alongside the fence. After the heavy rain, the ponds filled with water quite quickly. The area around the ponds has been landscaped with rocks and planted out with Juncus kraussii (200x) and Isolepsis nodosa (50x) and some Juncus usitatus. The ponds were quickly adopted by the local birds, skinks and frogs. Early this year we observed a brown striped marsh frog and a possibly a green and golden bell frog. We had tadpoles in three of the ponds but we are not sure how many, if any, made it to maturity.

Frog ponds and marsh area

- Bushcare Sunday 8th August 2013.We had about 1 volunteers. We planted Bursaria spinosa (x50 and Correa x50) in sections 15/16.
- In early July 2014 we were joined by 11 volunteers from the Lush Cosmetics Company for two days. With their help we moved a small mountain of dead wood and cestrum and completed the clearing and mulching of sections15/16 and did some planting. They were a great group and we really enjoyed their company. Our thanks go to Jasmine Payget (Cooks River Alliance) who helped make this happen.
- We have also been joined throughout the year by a number of Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers
- Our major plantings, in addition to those mentioned above, have been Leptospermum polygalifolium (Tea tree, 15x, section 6), Themeda australis (Kangaroo grass, x30+, section 7), Grevillea serica (pink spider flower) (30x, section 8), Daviesia ulicifolia and Dillwynia retorta ("Eggs and Bacon", ~50x, sections 15/6, some in section 4), Cymbopogon refractus (Barbed wire grass, 50x, sections 3 and lower 5). Also planted Melaleuca nodosa (x10, section3) and Pomaderris lanigera (40x) in various sections.
- Began planning and construction of walking trail in the lower part of the bush garden (3/4 finished).
- In July we were very pleased to get our new "Bushcare" banner to advertise what we do

The Rosedale Group would like to thank Peter Goss and Canterbury Council for their help and provision of plants

Wheel barrow "boys" Note Hans' modification

Sections 15/16 after the work of Lush Cosmetics volunteers

Our new banner

Foord Avenue site, Cooks River – August 2014

This year we celebrated five years of work at the Foord Avenue site, and finally reached the furthest western end of the site – the toughest challenge yet. This end was infested with all of the worst weeds – turkey rhubarb, brambles and madeira vine – in their thousands.
While some people dug out roots, and the kids held competitions to find the biggest tubers, others have set to work scraping back the shallow soil at the top to expose the beautiful sandstone shelves.

Our latest venture has been installing a sandstone terrace on the slope, with some donated sandstone slabs
Down at the foot of the cliff we've expanded into the area closest to the river, below the bicycle path, and this is becoming well established.

We are now seeing second-generation plants which have seeded from those we've planted, and watching the vegetation become more dense and provide better habitat. Still hoping to see the blue wrens return!

Liz Millen – Site Co-ordinator

EWEN PARK BUSH SITE REPORT JULY 2013 TO JULY 2014

This site is a joint project of the Friends of Ewen Park and the Mudcrabs. Over the twelve months since July 2013, we have had twelve working bees at the Ewen Park Bush Site, with a total of 180 adult and young adult volunteers signing in over this period, and half a dozen or so young children as well. There are about fifteen people who are regular volunteers at the site, as well as others who have come three or four times, and some who have come once or twice. In addition to the volunteers at the communal working bees, Keith Foulcher works on site every Wednesday morning for a couple of hours, and we also have a couple of regular waterers who work when needed — Ann Leahy and Judy Seaburn.

One of the great attractions of the Ewen Park site is its maze of pathways that allow people to move freely through the bush and down to the river. Children use these paths to run around, explore and play games, and it is a pleasure to see free play like this in a bush setting. Unfortunately, in the past twelve months the bush has also attracted some unwelcome visitors to the site, including vandals.

At the moment Ewen Park Bush is looking fantastic, with spring flowers blossoming. The eastern half of the site is now more or less full of plants, with large swathes of dianellas so thick on the ground that they are serving as a natural weed barrier. This has enabled us to concentrate new plantings on the western section of the site and the area adjacent to the pedestrian/cycle path. Weeds are pretty well under control right across the site at the moment, but the soil is so dry that we are already needing to water.

The great triumph of the year is the tap, which Canterbury Council installed last September in response to some special pleading. For the five years since the establishment of the site we had been carting water 400 metres from the picnic area in buckets, and although we still have to hand-water the site, at least the tap is on site.

Another source of joy was hosting the 2013 Mudcrabs Xmas Party. The bush was bright with tinsel and decorations, and it was great as always to gather with other Mudcrabs and Friends of Ewen Park.

- Nadia Wheatley, Sue Bishop, Keith Foulche

WAVE ROCK REPORT
2013/14

Peter Munro
Co-ordinator Wave Rock site

Wave Rock is a sandstone outcrop running beside Cooks River in Marrickville Golf Course. The site is about 70 metres long and 4 metres wide. The site has been identified in The Missing Jigsaw Pieces. The Bushland Plants of the Cooks (Benson et al 1999) as a potential focus for re-vegetation with appropriate woodland and heath species

The site is now 14 months young and we have planted more than 1200 native grasses, bushes and shrubs. A monthly, mid-week working bee has been well supported by Mudcrabs volunteers, Damon Bassett from Marrickville Council and staff from Marrickville Golf Course. Pleasingly we have also had a number of corporate volunteers come to work the site with us. This has provided much appreciated assistance. The vegetation is just beginning to take off with some recent rain. Many plants are flowering and setting seeds.

The Wave Rock site is situated just below a newly installed rain garden in the adjacent fairway of the golf course and will fit in well with the bush regeneration work along the sandstone escarpment in Beauchamp St.

Some of the winter blossoms at Wave Rock.

MONTHLY GOLF COURSE RIVERBANK CLEAN-UPS

Martin Puckert
Site coordinator

A new group was formed in July 2014 to remove rubbish once a month from the mangrove forests along the Marrickville Golf Course. The group is led by Martin Puchert and focusses on a 500m section of riverbank running from the golf clubhouse towards Wardell Road.

Rubbish tends to collect at this site within a matter of weeks. Although the site is cleaned by Mudcrabs on Clean Up Australia Day, it doesn't take long before new rubbish floats in on the high tide. The monthly clean-ups aim to do two things: create a better environment for local wildlife, and reduce the amount of plastic reaching the ocean. The effect of cleaning up on a monthly basis will be reviewed after six months.

REGENERATING THE GOUGH WHITLAM SALTMARSH

The Gough Whitlam Saltmarsh 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 established on the landward side of mangroves, and provides valuable and rare habitat for fish, crabs and birds.

The Gough Whitlam Saltmarsh was created by City of Canterbury to reclaim some of the saltmarsh that was filled in at the time of settlement. Although the saltmarsh established readily, it has been invaded by weeds including grasses such as kikuyu and couch, annual weeds like Bidens pilosa or 'pitchforks farmers friend" and the invasive swamp oak Casuarina glauca.

The year, with the help of the Mudcrabs and community volunteers, the project has helped to rehabilitate the saltmarsh. A large amount of weeds have been removed, which has helped the saltmarsh plant species to reestablish in new areas. Volunteers have also planted around the edges of the saltmarsh and in particular two entrance islands, to re-establish the riparian vegetation.

Salt Marsh in King Tide January 2013

In 2013-2014 there have been 10 working bees with 60 volunteers participating that have contributed 1,3200 hours volunteer labour.

Lana McGee and Russell Cail also carried out monitoring using the quadrant method, of counting plants in a small square laid out in transects. With the results shown below.

Percentage cover of the major plant species in the Tempe saltmarsh 2013-14
Vertical axis= % cover
Horizontal axis = Time
1=May
2=August
3=December
4=March
Open space
Triglochin
Suaeda
Sarcocornia
Marine couch
Juncus
Couch weed
Other weeds
Unidentified

CUP AND SAUCER CREEK WETLAND

Annual Report for Mudcrabs 2013-14

Cup & Saucer Creek Wetland is located at the end of Berna St, Canterbury in Heynes Reserve. The Wetland was constructed as a partnership project with Sydney Water, Sydney Metro Catchment Management Authority and the City of Canterbury.

The Wetland is made up of a series of 4 ponds which have been designed to remove sediments and pollutants from the water. The first pond captures the sediment, which has to be manually removed by council every so often. The next three ponds have been planted with water plants that help take up unwanted nutrients and pollutants from the water so when it flows back into the Cooks River the water quality has been improved.

The land around the wetland has been densely planted with over 27,000 plants and 40 different native species local to Canterbury. The Wetland has not only improved water quality entering the Cooks River but has also become an important local habitat for birds, frogs, lizards and turtles. The wetland also includes an outdoor education facility and interpretive signage for the local community.

In 2013-14 the Wetland has been maintained by the Mudcrabs and community volunteers. There have been 4 working bees with 34 volunteers contributing 68 hours of work. The work carried out has been weeding and the removal of casuarinas, which self-seed in the wetland.

In May 2014 a small hive of native bees was installed here. Thanks to the help of Samantha and Michael who volunteered to paint the hive stand and assist with its installation.

Council also removed part of a casuarina that split during a storm. Most of the trunk has been left on site to provide habitat.

Sediment had also built up in the first pond, which was threatening to block the inlet pipe. Council contracted Total Earth Care (the contractor who built the wetland) who removed the sediment. The path to the first pond is now a little trampled, but it should come back again soon.

Sediment in Pond 1 Adjusting water levels in the ponds

FRIENDS OF EWEN PARK

THE FRIENDS OF EWEN PARK are a group of people committed to the balanced use of the resources of Ewen Park for varying community needs — both for passive recreation and organised sport. We want local children and adults to enjoy a range of recreational activities in the park. In addition, we believe that the environmental capacity of this flood plain area must not be over-stretched, and the impact of park use should be shared.

Over the twelve months from August 2013 to August 2014, Friends of Ewen Park have worked as volunteers alongside Mudcrabs on the Ewen Park Bush Site, which is jointly managed by the two organisations.

Friends of Ewen Park were also active in the CRVA campaign to lobby Canterbury Council to honour its commitment to provide a multi-purpose community building at the eastern end of Ewen Park, in accordance with the Plan of Management for Ewen Park, 2008.
In regard to the provision of new community amenities for Ewen Park, the Friends of Ewen Park were also instrumental this year in persuading Canterbury Council to erect a new picnic shelter in the south-west corner of the picnic area, to replace a shelter that had been destroyed by vandals in January 2013. FEP representatives, supported by the CRVA, had a series of meetings with Council officers to decide the best location and size for the new shelter, which was ready by the new year of 2014.

Although this new shelter, together with the shelter at the north-east corner, has increased the amenities of this popular picnic area, there continue to be a number of items outstanding in the schedule of works for Ewen Park promised in the Plan of Management.

These include provision of additional barbecues and shelters and a complete upgrade of the play equipment (including provision of shade cloth), together with landscaping and revegetation of eroded mounds. As well, Council's Master Plan provides for a path running between the northern edge of the picnic area and Tennent Parade, to enable people using the on-street parking zone to move safely down to the playing fields, especially at night time.

With more and more families moving into the new apartments that are being built in our area, the picnic area of Ewen Park is increasingly playing a role in the development of community. It is not uncommon to see people setting up in one of the picnic shelters as early as 8 am, in order to be sure to have a place for a family party, and sometimes the one shelter can host a series of three or four gatherings in a single day and evening. As well, the park's play area provides a space for the kind of free and imaginative play that is a vital part of a child's development.
As our community grows and becomes even more diverse, the Friends of Ewen Park are committed to ensuring that Ewen Park remains a place for everyone.

Nadia Wheatley and Sue Bishop

TOSSERS

It's been a great year for the Tossers. The small band of 5-6 regular Tossers, have tossed a total of 8462 bottles and cans from the Cooks River over 11 Sundays from a small stretch of the River leading down from the Lang Rd Bridge to Ewen Park. In addition we have collected over 300 signatures and 50 letters of support for a 10 cent refund and Container Deposit Legislation, as well as having numerous conversations with the walkers, bikers, skaters, runners, cyclists and dog owners that traverse this stretch of the Riverbank

regarding the need for a 10c refund and why it would get rid of the bottle mess forever. A particular highlight of the year was Clean Up Australia Day, with the support of CRVA local groups & Mudcrab members, plus assistance from Canterbury Boys High School over 5000 plastic bottles were collected. The mountain of bottles gathered from a day collecting was extroidinary, but even better was the giant card with community messages of support for a CDL scheme. With assistance from Lisa Wriley of the Boomerang Alliance, a present of bottles from the day, plus the giant card was taken to Parliament House in April, unfortunately while we didn't get the bottles past security, the card was delivered to the then Premier Barry O Farrell.

Another highlight was working with the Responsible Runners and Clean Up Australia Day legend Ian Keirnan, who visited the Cooks River to highlight the issue locally and raise it with local members.

Finally we would like to thank a few people who have really helped this year; Ann Leahy for her amazing PR work and getting so many great articles re the Tossers in the press; Lisa Wriley from the Boomerang Alliance for all her support and resources and last but not least the CRVA executive whose continued support of the Tossers in the face of controversy has been much appreciated.

Tosserley yours
Kate Maclean

COOKS RIVER VALLEY ASSOCIATION INC

FINANCIAL REPORT 2013-14

Assets as at 30 June 2013

ING balance		***$7587.79***
CBA balance		***$276.58***
	TOTAL ASSETS	***$7864.37***

Income

Membership subscriptions		***$675***
Donations		***$1656.30***
Marrickville Council Grant		***$1196***
Canterbury City Council Grant		***$1381.60***
ING interest		***$277.95***
CBA Interest		***$0.04***
ATO - GST Refund		***$2739***
Miscellaneous		***$300***
	TOTAL INCOME	***$8225.89***
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	***$4976.90***
	OPERATING EXCESS (LOSS)	***$3248.99***

Assets as at 30 June 2014

ING balance		***$10765.74***
CBA balance		***$377.62***
Less Unpresented cheques		***$30***
Outstanding debtors/creditors nil *		
	TOTAL ASSETS	***$11113.36***

****Notes on GST.***

Subject to ATO acceptance we are due the following refund: *$218.26*

Notes on Expenditure.

$2577.60 was dispersed on specific projects as per conditions of Council Grants.

$1091 was spent to cover regular operating expenses such as, but not limited to, Community Volunteer Insurance, PO box rental, phone, Government compliance including a one off charge of $504 to the Department of Fair Trading.

The remainder was used to support The Mudcrabs, Friends of Ewan Park, community events such as Earthhour and to raise community awareness of issues affecting the valley.