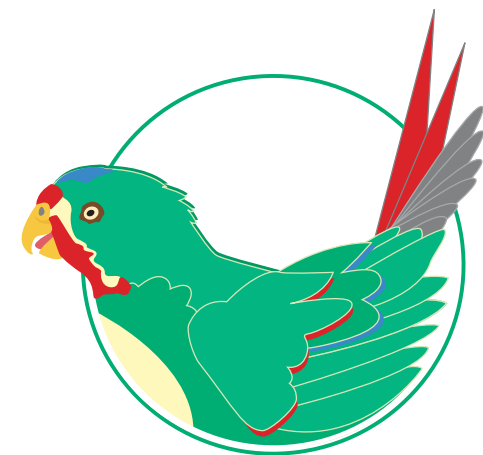
A scenic view of a creek with lush green trees and reeds, reflecting in the water. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the surrounding vegetation is dense and vibrant. The text "Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the right side of the image.

# **Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek**

For Olga,  
whose love and support  
has inspired us  
to accomplish every dream  
we have imagined  
together.



**Friends of  
Lower Kororoit Creek**

Geoffrey W Mitchelmore OAM  
27 August 2017

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# INTRODUCTION

*Kororoit Creek is one of the most important waterways in the West of Melbourne and a vital environmental corridor. Once a picnic retreat favoured by Victoria's early settlers, this corridor had been allowed to degrade into a sludgy, polluted drain through industrial activity and decades of neglect.*

Although I moved to Altona North with my family in 1973, it was quite a few years before we realised that we lived within 500 metres of Kororoit Creek.

When we learned of its existence, it soon became obvious that it was not a suitable place for any family to frequent. Adjacent to a large and disused, highly-dangerous derelict quarry, the Creek surrounds had become weed, debris and snake-infested. Thrill-seeking, speeding motorbike riders were its most regular patrons and it had earned a reputation as a no-go area, where drug dealings and other criminal activities took place. Our children were encouraged to stay away.

Increasing traffic congestion in the area was a separate but equally important issue at the time. Escalating truck traffic to local industries was impacting heavily on the quality of life and safety of Altona North residents; so much so that, in 1999, I requested the Victorian State Government consider building a bridge over Kororoit Creek to alleviate the problem. The government ultimately agreed to build this necessary infrastructure for our local community in 2000.

However, a publication prepared by the State Government Bridge Construction Committee – designed to inform the public of the project – referred to the Creek as the “Kororoit Creek Drain”.

This statement irritated me greatly and provided impetus for the formation of a ‘Friends Of’ group – dedicated to reversing the destructive cycle of damage and neglect, and to bringing Kororoit Creek back to its former healthy state.

Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek Inc. (FOLKC) was formed at a community meeting convened early in 2001, and was incorporated in April 2001.



Friends of **Lower Kororoit Creek**

*Original Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek Inc. Logo  
Designer: Kirsty Rayner 2001*



## KOROROIT CREEK

Kororoit Creek has a catchment area of 190 square kilometres; much larger in scope than many people realise. Its headwaters rise in the hills around Mt Aitkin, north-east of Gisborne, from where it meanders down past Sydenham West and Rockbank before following the Western Highway through Deer Park and Sunshine. Traversing a large portion of Melbourne's Western Suburbs on its journey, the creek then winds through Ardeer, Tottenham, Brooklyn, Altona North and Altona before flowing into the sea at Altona Bay, roughly midway between Altona and Williamstown.

Prior to the 1800s, the area surrounding Kororoit Creek consisted mostly of basalt plains grassland, replete with native grasses and wildflowers. Not many trees survived on the young basalt clays.

Despite so many years of neglect, Kororoit Creek retained small pockets of original remnant vegetation along its length even as late as the end of the 20th Century, and some of its surviving ancient River Red Gums are quite spectacular. It is among its numerous rocky outcrops that most of the significant native vegetation persists to this day.

Spectacular wetlands, featuring many different species of migratory birds – some of which travel south annually from as far away as Russia and China – occur along the Creek, and abundant native wildlife can be spotted on any given day.



*Kororoit Creek Map*

## CREEK NAME

Settlers who first arrived in 1835 dubbed the waterway “Tea Tree Creek”. This name reflected the variety of shrubbery (*Leptospermum lanigerum* - Woolly Tea Tree) which lined its banks in profusion at that time of white settlement. Unfortunately, the Creek was often confused with the Maribyrnong River and is sometimes referred to as “Salt Water River” in historical documents – this being the original name given to the Maribyrnong. One possible derivation for the name Kororoit is believed to come from an Aboriginal word meaning ‘male kangaroo’. A second possibility is that it was derived from the Aboriginal name for the entire district now known as the City of Hobsons Bay – “Koort-boork-boork”, meaning ‘She-Oak’.



*Bocce Embankment, 2012*



*Below Bocce, 2015*

## FLORA AND FAUNA

In the 1890s, a young resident of the Altona North area named Ann Hall spent many happy times along the Creek. She later wrote her memoirs, which provide valuable insights into the flora and fauna proliferating at that time. Ann recalled countless blissful afternoons spent at Kororoit Creek near Blackshaws Road with her sisters, and reminisced:

*“...there was a lovely deep water hole and waterfalls from a small creek which emptied into it. The high banks were studded with large boulders with wide gaps cracked through them... (and) spiny Cunningham skinks twelve to sixteen inches long would emerge from rock crevices and bask in the sun...”*

Ann described many of the plants, animals and bird-life abounding the Creek in detail, including the huge clumps of river tea tree growing along its length, which gave off a superb, distinctive fragrance when covered in their seasonal small, white flowers.

*Cunningham Skinks*

*Photography: Len Towerzey, 2016*



*Sacred Kingfisher*

*Photography: Len Towerzey, 2016*

*Rainbow Lorikeet*

*Photography: Len Towerzey, 2016*





## ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

Aboriginal occupation of the full length of Kororoit Creek and the surrounding area is evident in the form of its many scattered artefacts. Scar trees – where canoes were carved from the bark of Red Gums – can be found dotted along the Creek, and fish and bird traps are also evident to the trained observer. In fact, the Victorian Archaeological Survey has identified nearly twenty sites of archaeological interest along the Creek's length. These sites are protected by law.

Within Melton, one site of Aboriginal significance is the Bullen Bullen Aboriginal Reserve which is currently being developed. A management committee is ensuring that it is preserved and maintained for the benefit of all.

Another is in Altona North, on Crown Land designated for cemetery purposes. In 2008, the Biosis Research archaeology team discovered massive quantities of Aboriginal artefacts, mainly stone chips that were possibly associated with the manufacture of ground edges on cutting tools. An unusual stone ring formation also found on the site may well have Aboriginal significance and needs further investigation.

These artefacts are of historic importance to the people of Yalukit-willam of the Boon wurrung Country which makes up the Greater Kulin Nation. This group is the traditional owner of the land now comprising the city of Hobsons Bay prior to Anglo/European settlement, and the site is one of the only sections of the Kororoit Creek corridor which has not been disturbed by inappropriate development.

The Biosis Research archaeological team consequently had the area declared a site of Culturally Significant Importance.

In addition, the area is visually spectacular, featuring beautiful volcanic inclusions, and many remnant species of native plants, including Sweet Bursaria, Pale Flax-Lily, Spiny-Headed Mat-Rush, Kangaroo Grass and Tangled Lignum can be seen along the Creek.



*Aboriginal Heritage Site escarpment in Altona North*



*KANGAROO GRASS (Themeda triandra)*



*PALE FLAX-LILY (Dianella longifolia)*





*The Founding of Melbourne/Landing from the Yarra Basin, c1870*  
*Photograph courtesy of 'La Trobe Picture Collection' – State Library of Victoria*

## EARLY EUROPEAN HISTORY

European explorers first encountered Kororoit Creek in 1803. Governor of the Colony of New South Wales, Philip King, commissioned a survey party aboard the schooner CUMBERLAND to examine Port Phillip Bay by walking the entire length of its shoreline. James Flemming, an experienced agriculturalist, recorded brief impressions of an excursion from Point Gellibrand to Point Cook in February 1803. Mention was made in his journals of crossing two “runs” or creeks, one of which “still tasted of the salt tides” where the exploration party forded it. This was Kororoit Creek.

In August 1835, surveyor John Helder Wedge arrived in the colony from Van Diemen’s Land, with a view to surveying the 600,000-acres John Batman had acquired from the Aboriginals in May of that year. On 29 August 1835, during one of several surveying

excursions of the area, Wedge and his three Aboriginal guides skirted a She-Oak forest which fringed the Bay and spent the night camping at a waterhole. The following day, Wedge reported that his party had crossed a salt-water creek which fed into Port Phillip Bay via an expanse of lowlands. This was the next official mention of Kororoit Creek on record.

It was during this expedition on 31 August 1835 that Wedge came across John Pascoe Fawcner’s schooner ENTERPRIZE, anchored on the Yarra River – the day after the first settlers arrived and landed their goods on the river’s banks.

When the earliest graziers – commencing with John Batman and John Fawcner and their respective parties – took their flocks west, Kororoit Creek became an important source of fresh water along the treeless, often arid plains.



*The boat the Enterprize, on which Fawcner’s party arrived in Melbourne in 1835, on the Yarra.*  
*Gordon H. Woodhouse, photographer, and Schell, Frederic B. artist, circa 1925.*  
*Transparency: colour glass lantern slide.*  
*From the State Library of Victoria’s Pictures Collection.*





*Heritage-listed 1880s Brooklyn Bluestone Bridge*

During the Victorian gold rushes of the 1850s, Kororoit Creek created a barrier to the thousands of gold miners heading for the diggings, in and around Ballarat. Due to the often-formidable obstacle the Creek posed, diggers were forced to cross it at naturally-occurring fords – shallow, intermittent flat points along the waterways which had been shown to provide good footing for people, animals and vehicles. These fords later became an ideal location for man-made bridges.

One such bridge is the Brooklyn Bluestone Bridge. One of the earliest bridges built to span over Kororoit Creek in 1889, it is significant for its use of an unusual hybrid of bluestone and concrete construction, and notable for its elegant series of segment arches which are reminiscent of many early colonial bridges in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania. Still standing today, this magnificent bridge presents an outstanding entrance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Historically, the bridge is also noteworthy for its being the oldest surviving road bridge within the Hobsons Bay municipality; one of an only small number of stone bridges from this era on any major roadway reserve in our greater metropolitan area.

It is an integral element to the Kororoit Creek environs, illustrating the early development and alignment of the Geelong Road reserve – one of the first to be surveyed in the Colony by Hoddle in the pre-1840s period.

In the 1850s, pastoralists settled the entire area from Altona to Geelong, including the renowned Chirnside brothers, Thomas and Andrew, overland sheep graziers from Scotland. The Chirnside brothers built the outstanding Werribee Park Mansion – still a thriving tourist attraction – as a home base for their families in 1874-77, as well as the Point Cook Homestead at the edge of Hobsons Bay – built in 1857 as a first, temporary residence then used regularly after the Mansion's construction as a family hunting lodge. The Chirnside's grand hunting parties attracted many participants from the upper echelons of early Australian society, particularly the landed gentry. Unfortunately, the legacy they created when they stocked our area with imported European foxes and rabbits for the hunt is not so proud a heritage.

*Werribee Park Mansion*





*Williamstown Racecourse*

In 1865, the area abounding the mouth of Kororoit Creek was reserved for a future racecourse. This racecourse and large grandstand were subsequently built during the late 1880s. During the Second World War, the grandstand became the main canteen for the army camp which occupied the racecourse. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by fire in 1946.



*Suspicious fire razes Williamstown Racecourse Grandstand in 1946*

Australia's first petroleum refinery was established on the banks of the Creek in 1922 by Commonwealth Oil Refineries (COR), in partnership with the Federal Government and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. It was situated on a 400-hectare site which straddles the Creek between Kororoit Creek Road and Barnes Road, Altona North.

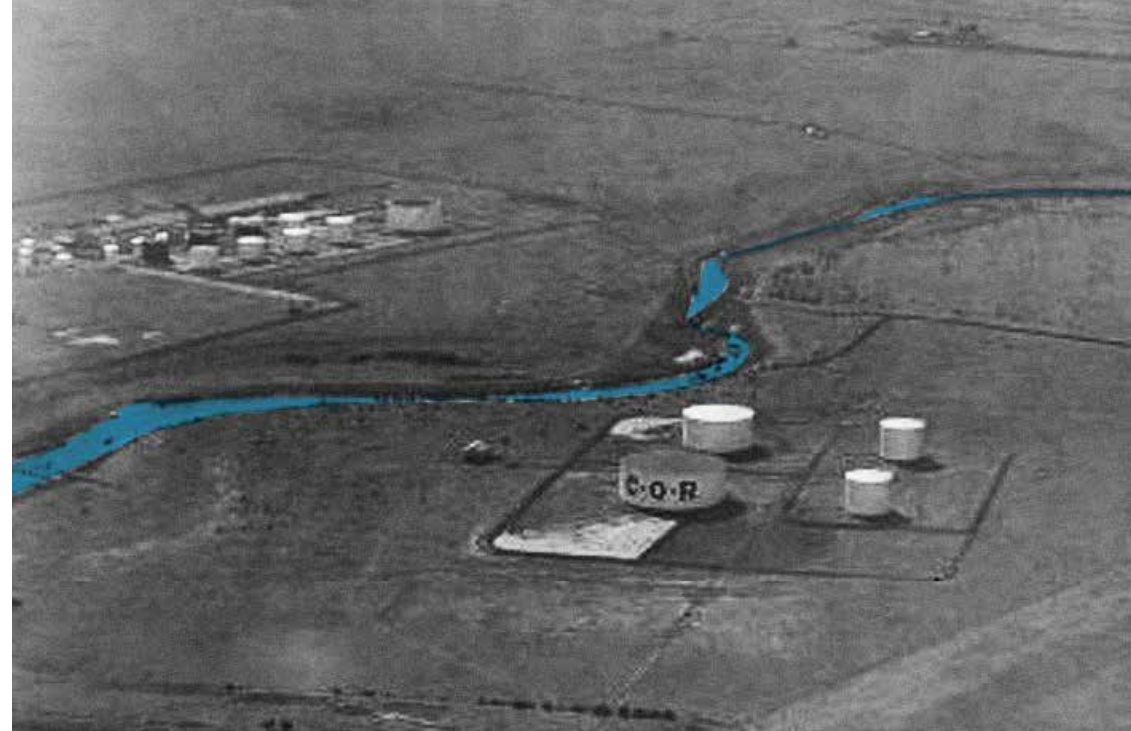
*Commonwealth Oil Refinery, c1930s  
Photograph courtesy of 'La Trobe Picture Collection' – State Library of Victoria*







*Kororoit Creek, Deer Park, c1930s*



*Kororoit Creek, Altona North, c1938*



*Kororoit Creek,  
Wide Bend, c1950s*





*Historic pipeline bridge, linking the storage area to the refinery*

## LEGACIES OF EARLY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

In early settlement days, rivers and creeks in and around Melbourne were typically labelled as drains – the Yarra as #1 Drain, Maribyrnong River #2, and so on – with the result that the community tended to view our waterways as an easy avenue for the disposal of all variety of unwanted materials. This attitude gave rise to a widespread disrespect of the local waterways, leading to the devaluation of these very important amenities. Over the years, the general population, businesses and industries continued increasingly polluting Kororoit Creek resulting in some major pollution impacts, some of which are listed below:

- During the late 1800s, nearby abattoirs regularly released blood into the Creek as a convenient method of disposing of this unwanted by-product, creating an environmental and an extreme health hazard;
- During the life of the Williamstown Race Course (1870 - 1946), the management of the course was responsible for dumping raw sewage into the Creek from its crude toilet facilities. These rudimentary toilets were built directly on the bank of the Creek, resulting in faeces being washed down its length to then discharge, untreated, into Port Phillip Bay;

- Since the 1920s, oil and effluent pollution has been regularly reported in the Creek due to operational issues at the COR and PRA/Mobil Refineries;
- In the 1980s, EPA Victoria reported heavy metal contamination at the mouth of the Creek; and
- In 1950s, industrial pollution of the Creek became excessive after contaminants in the soil, derived from the ICI Explosives Manufacturing Plant in Deer Park, leached into its water. This leaching continues today, impacting on water quality of the Creek all the way from Deer Park out to the Bay.

Unfortunately, contaminating practices continue to sully the Creek, with little abatement. Frequently, plastic bottles, tyres, paper, soil and mown grass are among the waste materials washed into the Creek from land litter and stormwater drains. The toxic by-products of these discarded materials then accumulate in the phragmites until floods push the waste out into Port Phillip Bay. Therefore, any efforts to restore the Creek to a pristine environment in turn have a positive environmental impact upon the larger Melbourne metropolitan area via our locally-accessible bays, as well as the valuable marine life populating them.

*Litter left upon pipeline bridge, after flooding*





# FRIENDS OF LOWER KOROROIT CREEK Inc.

## BEGINNINGS

Late in 2000, I became involved in the process of building a bridge over Kororoit Creek at Barnes Road, with the aim of alleviating the heavy truck traffic problem in and around Altona North. During the bridge construction's planning phase, a Hobsons Bay Council Officer was asked to inform the local community about the development, resulting in a government-issued news release which referred to the proposed bridge as spanning a section of the Kororoit Creek "drain".

In appreciation of the Creek's true value, I immediately insisted that the item should be rewritten using more appropriate, modern phrasing, recognising that the highly-degraded and heavily-polluted Kororoit Creek was, in fact, potentially one of the most important waterways in Melbourne's West and deserved better than to be labelled with its antiquated "drain" status.

As a result, I came to the conclusion that – in order to facilitate long-lasting, meaningful change – it was long past time for the local community to take charge of this invaluable local resource, and do the work necessary to transform this overgrown, forgotten, weed-infested, rubbish-littered and totally environmentally-degraded Kororoit Creek into an inviting 'Corridor of Green' – a family-friendly haven people could more safely and willingly use for their recreation and varied leisure pursuits.

Informing my wife, Olga, of my plan, and demand for the news release's amendment, I was startled when she pointed out – quite correctly – that the Creek was indeed being used as a drain. I had to agree, but managed to persuade her of my vision to transform this neglected eyesore back to some semblance of its original, thriving, unpolluted glory. Action had to be taken to restore the Creek before it was too late and all its indigenous flora and fauna had been choked out of existence by negligence, carelessness and deliberate, environmentally-destructive intent.

As I worked to formulate an action plan, I was informed that one Brimbank community group had, over the years, successfully restored upper sections of Kororoit Creek in partnership with Brimbank Council, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water.

Armed with this knowledge, I felt even more certain that similar undertakings could be successful along the Creek's Altona North stretches.

By early 2001, locals Craig and Debbi Woods and myself had formed a core team to take action on the Creek. By advertising in the local media, we invited interested people to attend, discuss and suggest possible strategies to help us clean-up and green the Kororoit Creek corridor within our Hobsons Bay district.

Our first meeting took place on 20 February 2001 at the Hobsons Bay City Council (HBCC) meeting rooms in Altona, with a total of ten people in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Hobsons Bay Council Ranger, Susie Inglis. At that time, it was HBCC practice to take the lead role in running all 'Friends' groups operating in Hobsons Bay, strictly limiting groups such as ours to only planting trees and shrubs in the various areas as the full extent of any environmental reinvigoration by laypeople.

I immediately found this policy limiting and knew that adhering to it would never achieve our aims. To meet our expectations and achieve any major goals outside this 'tree planting only' activity, I realised that control of the group needed to rest entirely with our core independent management team, and not with local or any other tier of government.

Only with the freedom to 'colour outside the lines' would there be any real hope for us to turn around the dire situation along Kororoit Creek. We had to have the liberty to create the kind of meaningful, responsive action plans needed to tackle urgent issues at the Creek as we identified them, and only then could we consider involving government and industry in our continuing activities.

Subsequently, I attended the Brimbank Friends of Kororoit Creek (FKC) committee meeting with a request for that group to consider allowing FOLKC to set up as a sub-committee of FKC, operating strictly within Hobsons Bay. Unfortunately, the FKC committee was reticent about any such move, concerned that its on-going reliance on Brimbank Council funding might be placed in potential jeopardy by our much more independently-focused activities.

After further investigation and discussion, our core team decided that the only viable way forward was for our group of volunteers to function independently within the Hobsons Bay area, sourcing our funding in the first instance from local council grants wherever possible, so that Creek corridor improvement activities could begin in earnest, as soon as might be arranged.

Thus, the 'Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek' was born.

## FRIENDS OF LOWER KOROROIT CREEK Inc.

The formal establishment of 'Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek (FOLKC)' and its core management committee was enacted in early April 2001, and the group was subsequently incorporated on 12 April 2001. Our first Annual General Meeting was held on 2 July 2002 in the CRT Group's 'Habitat Trust' Offices, at Barnes Road, Altona North, during which our committee structure was developed.

Our Executive Committee comprised:

- President: Geoff Mitchelmore;
- Public Officer: Ray Blythman;
- Secretary: Susanna Moore; and
- Treasurer: Simon Hogan.

And all people from the local community who attended were named as committee members.

*FOLKC members 'Planting Day BBQ' in 2002*



Annual and joining fees were set but the committee agreed several years later to dissolve the need for fees, once the FOLKC became financially-viable. This decision was taken due to a committee-wide belief that enthusiasm and membership might be discouraged by charging fees for participation. This has led to an annual moment of levity for us, when we take a motion during each AGM to double the membership fees for the forthcoming year!

Initial grants from Parks Victoria (\$500) and Hobsons Bay City Council (\$1000) allowed FOLKC to set-up our organisation and fund our first revegetation project. FOLKC held this first planting on 3 June 2001 along the bank of the Kororoit Creek, below Blackshaws Road in Altona North. At this planting, and despite winter's chilly depths, FOLKC had an encouraging 201 enthusiastic volunteers attend, which happily included twenty children and two most helpful canines.



*Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek Inc. Logo*

*Designer: Kristen Mitchelmore 2008*



# KOROROIT CREEK CONCEPT PLAN

After this first planting, members of FOLKC walked the length of the Kororoit Creek corridor within Hobsons Bay and FOLKC life member, Kristen Mitchelmore, subsequently developed a concept-plan for the Creek based on our observations and ideas.

The concept drawings for the five areas along the Creek are shown below:



Stage 1:  
Geelong Road to  
Hosken Reserve



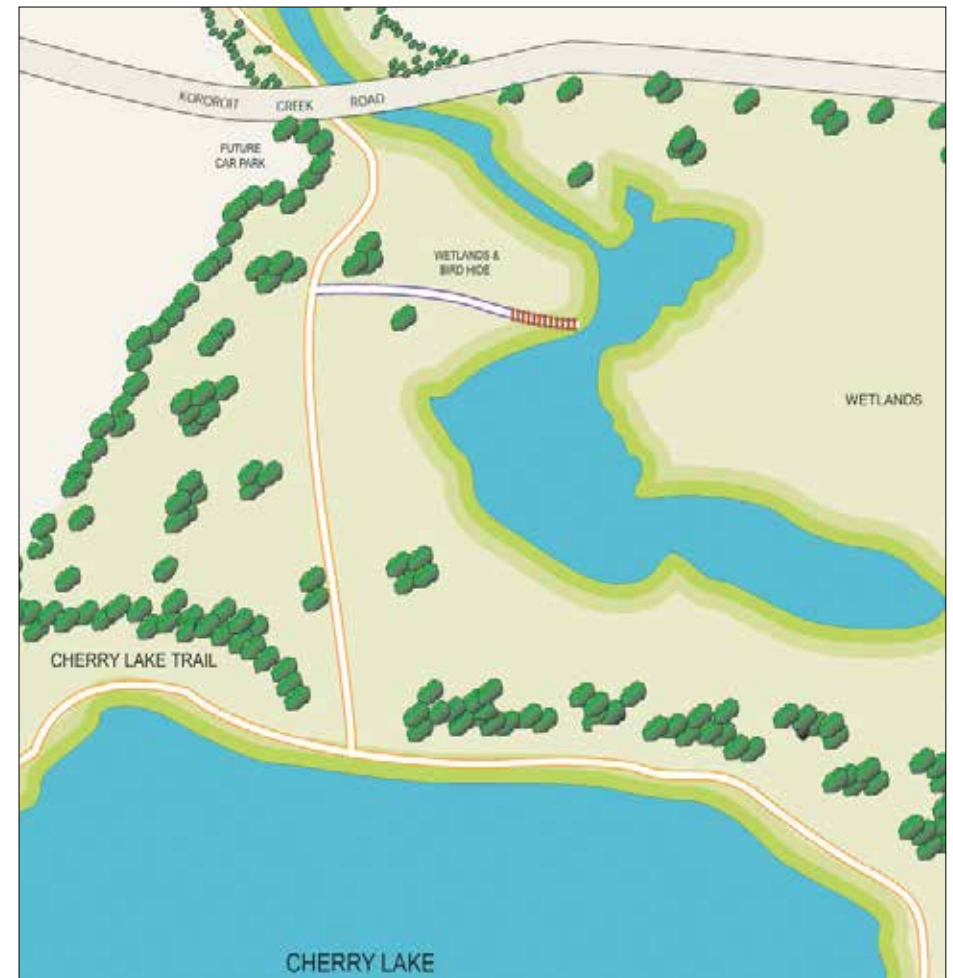
Stage 2:  
Hosken Reserve  
to McArthurs Road



Stage 3:  
McArthurs Road  
to Barnes Road



*Stage 4:  
Barnes Road  
to Kororoit  
Creek Road*



*Stage 5: Kororoit Creek Road to Cherry Lake*



# VISION & OBJECTIVES

At one of our first meetings, FOLKC set its overall vision for the future of the Creek and outlined two major objectives, so that it could effectively monitor progress along the way.

## VISION

- To protect and enhance the natural character of Kororoit Creek for future generations to use and enjoy; and
- To allow access for people and animals via a network of shared trails and native vegetation along Kororoit Creek.

## OBJECTIVES

FOLKC set itself two main objectives upon which to measure its progress and success in developing the Kororoit Creek corridor as an important green space in Hobsons Bay, with the aim of attracting a wider segment of the community for recreation and enjoyment of the corridor.

These objectives were, firstly, to establish a 'Corridor of Green' all the way along the Creek within Hobsons Bay; and, secondly, to connect Cherry Lake in Altona to Geelong Road in Brooklyn, approximately eight kilometres distant, via a shared walking/bicycle path, ultimately linking the Kororoit Creek Trail to the Hobsons Bay 'Bay Trail'.

*FOLKC members during a concept plan development meeting*



*FOLKC members during a concept plan development meeting*

### OBJECTIVE 1: Establishment of a Green Corridor

FOLKC realised that it would need to involve all sections of the community to ensure it could meet its objective of restoring the corridor's entire length to green. Some of the goals that provided us focus during planning included:

- celebration of the native environment;
- involvement of local school children;
- promotion of the waterway in recognition of its true environmental, recreational and historic value;
- building partnerships and sponsorships with local industry and government organisations; and
- formal strategy development.

## Celebration of the Native Environment

It was the decision of FOLKC that tree plantings needed to be promoted as major celebrations and important community events. To achieve this aim, I implemented techniques developed over my decades working in amateur theatre to 'attract an audience'. Our aim was to ensure that celebration attendees would have fun, get dirty, but also leave our event with happy memories and the knowledge they had made a special contribution to their environment.

We would offer tree-planting training along with complimentary barbecues, chocolates, lollies and other donated giveaways, as well as entertainment provided courtesy of professional performers. Our hope was that, having been introduced to this hitherto undiscovered and unexplored local environment, participants might be encouraged to continue to enjoy the green space into the future and, hopefully, this would include an ongoing involvement in future FOLKC activities.

*FOLKC members on an observation and planning walk*



*HBCC Ranger Susie Inglis with Bayside School students, in 2006*

## Involvement of Local School Children

FOLKC immediately identified that its strength would clearly be defined through its membership involving all ages and sections of the local community. But we felt there was a special reward in offering local school children the chance to learn how to plant a tree and care for the land. By introducing them to their waterway in this hands-on way and teaching them about prevailing flora and fauna, we hoped they might develop a sense of ownership and a responsibility towards protecting their environment well into the future – and not just around Kororoit Creek, but wherever their life adventures might lead them.



## Promotion of the Waterway

FOLKC realised that, to improve community awareness of the waterway, we needed publicity. To achieve this, we decided to promote the Kororoit Creek waterway to schools, industry and at community group meetings.

We required the support of local newspapers to publish articles and photographs of events; we needed artistic, aesthetically-pleasing, commercially-produced brochures, newsletters and handbills to show the professional approach and commitment of FOLKC, as well as a state-of-the-art website. We also highlighted a need to develop illustrated PowerPoint presentations, so that we could best engage community bodies about the Creek's importance to our local area, whenever the opportunity presented. We hoped these activities might encourage community members and their families to venture into the corridor and better recognise its relevance and value and, hopefully, contribute to its future well-being.

## Building Partnerships and Sponsorships

To meet our objectives, FOLKC identified the need to be relevant and accessible to the area's many culturally-diverse communities, and to encourage local industries and government to play their parts in helping carry out necessary improvements to the waterway. FOLKC recognised that we needed to consult and work with all sectors to achieve sustainable natural resource management for our section of Kororoit Creek. We appreciated early on that much of our strength would be derived from partnerships with federal, state and local government tiers, with industry, with the local business community, and with schools and the wider community at large. To achieve this aim, we understood that all activities run by FOLKC needed to be effective and well-organised and, wherever possible, sponsored by all industry and institutional partners we could sway to our cause. FOLKC importantly identified that it would be necessary to ensure that all sponsors/partners received 'value for money'; hence, every effort was made to guarantee that our partners fully understood how their sponsorship would be used and the precise way they would receive credit for their contributions.

## Formal Strategy Development

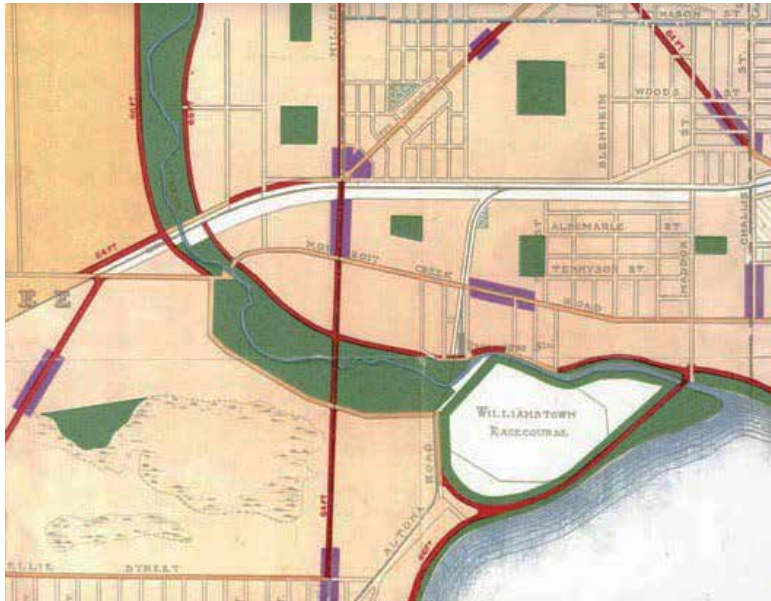
FOLKC realised we needed to participate in the many plans and strategies already under development by various government tiers and agencies – with a focus on local government – in order to effectively implement the Kororoit Creek corridor's rehabilitation. To do this, I ensured that FOLKC was always represented in these processes and meetings so that our section of the Creek environs could be properly considered, at every stage. We have always striven, and will continue to strive, to be involved in the multitude of developed and developing strategies and the implementation of any plans likely to impact on our vital Creek environment.

*Agencies & Industry strategy implementation discussion*



## OBJECTIVE 2: Shared Trail Development

FOLKC identified that many studies had been done throughout the 1800s and 1900s which incorporated developing a trail along the Kororoit Creek corridor, yet none had ever been implemented.

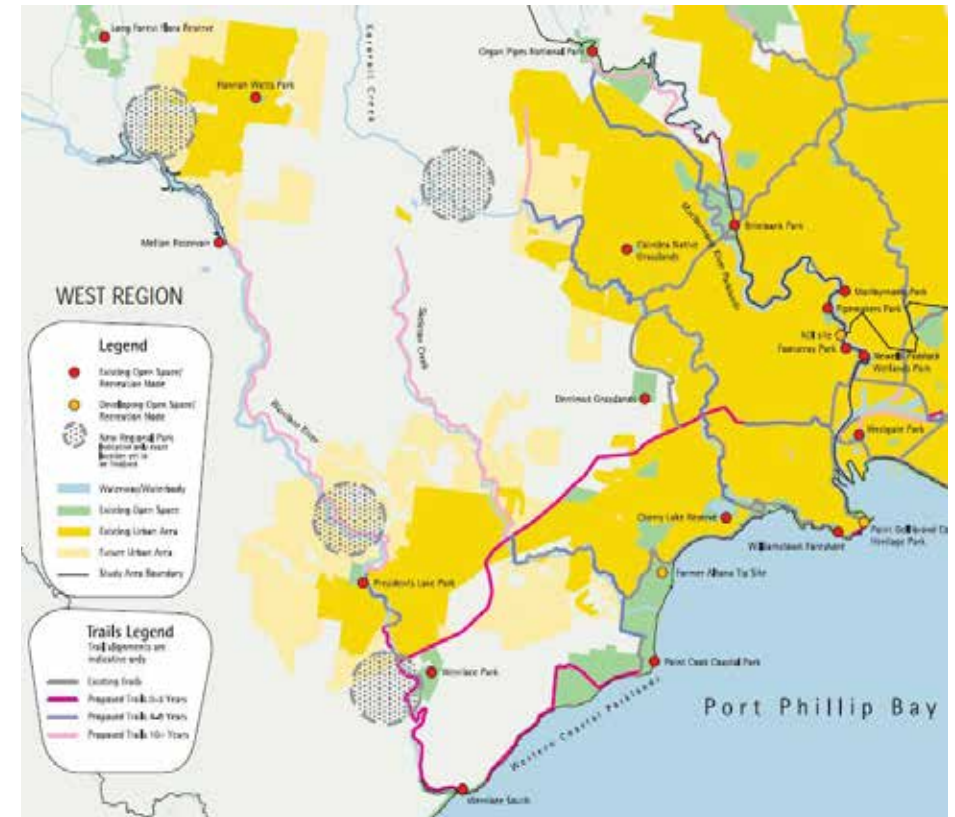


*Melbourne Town Planning Commission: Melbourne Suburbs (1929)*

Parks Victoria's 'People + Places Strategy 2002' was the most recent strategy to include the Kororoit Creek corridor as an integral part of the Metropolitan Trail Network. It recommended to the Victorian State Government that the trail along the Creek be built before 2011.

Despite this, there had been no action by government agencies to begin developing this section of trail between West Sunshine and Altona, as it had no support from Hobsons Bay, Wyndham or Brimbank Councils and, therefore, a detailed plan for this section had never been implemented.

Thus, it was important that a fully-detailed and up-to-date plan be funded – one which outlined the exact practical requirements of developing this section of the Kororoit Creek Trail safely – before it could even be brought before authorities for consideration.



*Parks Victoria: People + Spaces Strategy (2002) plan*

When implemented, this plan would see the creation of a biodiverse, environmentally viable corridor which would achieve sustainable, sheltered populations of indigenous flora and fauna species, as well as linking all major parks and reserves along the route via a walking/cycling path within Hobsons Bay, including such specific local landmarks as:

<i>Altona Coastal Park</i>	<i>Skeleton Creek Environmental Corridor</i>
<i>Cherry Lake</i>	<i>Truganina Explosives Reserve</i>
<i>Greenwich Bay Reserve</i>	<i>Truganina Park Reserve</i>
<i>Laverton Creek Environmental Corridor</i>	<i>Westona Wetlands</i>
<i>Newport Lakes</i>	<i>Williamstown Wetlands</i>
<i>Point Gellibrand Park Reserve</i>	<i>100 Steps To Federation Park</i>
<i>Kororoit Creek Environmental Corridor</i>	





*Industry meets environment – Hobsons Bay, today*



# IMPLEMENTATION

## PARTNERSHIPS & SPONSORSHIPS

### Community Partnerships

Community support is the essential element that has driven our developments along the Kororoit Creek, with individual FOLKC members using their networking resources to attract multicultural and other community groups within Hobsons Bay into becoming a part of our busy action group.

FOLKC has conducted many major community plantings along the corridor over the years with local groups including Lions International, nearby primary and secondary schools, popular scouting groups and 4WD-clubs, and varied community groups representing our many diverse cultures across the Western region, as well as other enthusiastic local special interest organisations which showed an enthusiasm for helping out. International group, Conservation Volunteers Australia, also threw its hat in the ring, bringing volunteers from communities all over the world to participate in achieving our environmental aims, providing us invaluable input and support.

*MOBIL 'Urban Forest' riparian planting, 2004*



*FOLKC 'Planting Day', 2004*

### Government Partnerships

Over our fifteen years, considerable interest has been shown in our projects by federal, state and local government authorities, and all have willingly made substantial financial commitments towards future developments along the Kororoit Creek corridor.

The support given to FOLKC projects by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) through its funding of the 'Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy 2005 - 2030' and the 'Vision for Werribee Plains' Grant Program have contributed greatly to our successful development of the Kororoit Creek corridor.



## Industry & Business Partnerships

Local industries and businesses have also been major contributors towards ensuring the success of our plantings and developments along the Creek. We have achieved excellent results through donations of their goods and services, along with in-kind support from business organisations and individual employees.

Major sponsorship from Millers Inn – a local hotel and gaming venue – allowed FOLKC to become autonomous by enabling us to buy our own 4WD-vehicle – a vital asset in carrying out our work along the Creek corridor.

Over the years, FOLKC has actively developed partnerships with such major organisations as Toyota Australia, Toll Group, CRT Group, Mobil Altona Refinery and the Altona Memorial Park, all of which front Kororoit Creek. The support given to FOLKC because of these partnerships has been heartening and well-beyond expectations.



## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

As discussed earlier, the 'FOLKC Kororoit Creek Concept Plan (2001)' was heavily utilised over the first few years, in conjunction with Melbourne Water's 'Kororoit Creek Activity Plan', to guide our rehabilitation of the much-degraded section of Kororoit Creek within Hobsons Bay. In initial phases, our primary goal was to improve the Creek vegetation by removing introduced plants, planting native species and protecting all remnant vegetation. However, since the development of our concept plan, many more diverse strategies have been – or are being – implemented through FOLKC initiatives, some of which are outlined below.

### Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy (2005–2030)

Through my involvement on the Barnes Road Bridge Committee in 2000, I arranged for several state and local government representatives and industry committee members to meet with officers representing Victorian State Premier Steve Bracks MP and Parliamentarian Lynne Kosky MP, to discuss land 'ownership' and other issues impacting upon the Kororoit Creek corridor development. Shortly after that meeting, a committee member from the Department of Infrastructure (DoI) called me to announce that his Department had resolved to fund a \$250,000 Strategy to rescue and preserve the entire length of Kororoit Creek within the Melbourne Metropolitan area.

Dubbed the 'Kororoit Creek Strategy (2005 - 2030)', its \$250,000 funding would be used to provide a far-reaching planning framework for the preservation and environmentally-sensitive development of the Kororoit Creek corridor over a 25-year period, commencing in 2005. This integrated strategy was a first for any such waterway in Victoria and would include a detailed, professional analysis of the Creek corridor, addressing such matters as biodiversity, planning controls, waterway management, trails and recreation, landscape character, cultural heritage and geomorphology. This strategy was to be the declared blueprint for:

*"The establishment of a major Public Park and Recreation Zone corridor along the reaches of the Creek that will preserve these sections for use by future generations; the need for a shared trail along the Creek; the planning and development of open space along the Creek corridor; the rehabilitation of the waterway corridor; and the protection and enhancement of natural form and cultural heritage values."*

Once the 'Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy' policy was released in 2005, I was quick to recognise that it failed to include any practical means of implementing the necessary changes needed to drive protection of the waterway long term. I realised that, to implement such a far-reaching strategy, a full-time, paid co-ordinator would be necessary to steer it forward. Enlisting the expert help of HBCC Chief Executive Officer, Bill Jaboor, we managed to source \$190,000 funding through the 'Local Government Sustainability Accord Fund'.

I then joined the newly-established Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy Steering Group, whose first act was to employ Project Officer Vince Andreana under a four-year contract, to drive the strategy from policy all the way into practical action.

The committee's primary major goal for our Project Officer was to prepare and implement the necessary Planning Scheme amendments for the municipalities of Hobsons Bay, Brimbank, Wyndham and Melton which would protect the biodiversity and geomorphic values of the Creek corridor through the creation of a permanent, continuous, publicly-managed and accessible waterway.

An Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) was established and put into law in 2013, ensuring the preservation of a 30-metre minimum bed and bank corridor on both sides of the Creek, and encompassing all Public Park and Recreation Zoned (PPRZ) land already preserved for community use, the combination of which would adequately protect the environmental corridor well into the future. One section of the ESO in Hobsons Bay is shown below:



*Environmental  
Significance  
Overlay –  
Geelong Road to  
Dohertys Road*

In the interim, I have continued to encourage local industry along the Creek to consider handing over their PPRZ land to the public, although ownership issues with Mobil and QUBE are yet to be resolved to date. Toyota handed back its land along the Creek in the 1990s, and the Altona North Landfill – after much discussion and formal legal action – is set to hand back its land to community in 2017, as part of an Environmental 173 agreement made in 1993.

### **Hobsons Bay Kororoit Creek Masterplan (2006)**

With the 'Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy' (KCRS) underway, FOLKC recognised that it was essential for Hobsons Bay City Council to now be involved in the project, primarily so that a formal masterplan for the corridor within Hobsons Bay could be developed in-line with the declared government strategy, which we felt would ensure that all activities conducted along the Creek could be completed in harmony with any future government planning objectives for our City.

All previous activities along the Creek had been implemented through the 'Melbourne Water Kororoit Creek Waterway Management Activity Plan (2004)' – a plan which showed elements of the Creek that needed to be developed, but not one which gave an overall direction for the future. FOLKC saw that, to fully develop the land abutting Kororoit Creek into the envisioned 'Corridor of Green', one of its most important functions would be to establish partnerships with government agencies, as well as individual industries, along the Creek.

Despite my requests for the development of this masterplan, HBCC considered that, due to financial restraints, other environmental projects needed to take priority. Although we were disappointed with this decision, FOLKC believed that the outcome for which we were fighting was far too important to let our momentum die there.

Undeterred, I decided to approach Stewart Naismith, General Manager of Millers Inn requesting the management consider sponsoring FOLKC in our vision for lower Kororoit Creek, with any initial sponsorship to go directly to HBCC towards funding the masterplan. Thanks to Mr Naismith's support, I was able to present HBCC with a cheque that ensured the development of the 'Hobsons Bay Kororoit Creek Masterplan (2006)', completed by Thompson Birrell Landscape Architects. This subsequently gave FOLKC all the necessary planning tools to achieve our goals in developing the Kororoit Creek green corridor.



### **National Recovery Plan for Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)**

In 2003, I identified the need to protect the endangered Swift Parrot when moves were put in place to remove a large stand of eucalyptus gums from Paisley Park, Altona North. With the aid of the local Altona North community, we successfully fought to save those trees, thereby helping preserve the endangered parrot population into the future.

I then lobbied successfully to include the long-term protection and development of habitat for the Swift Parrot at Paisley Park and along the Kororoit Creek corridor, through several Hobsons Bay strategies. FOLKC requested that flowering eucalypts become an integral inclusion in the landscape masterplan, to protect the bird habitat as part of the official 'Swift Parrot Recovery Plan'.

Since 2003, FOLKC has planted more than 3000 flowering eucalypt gums, the species recommended by Chris Tzaros, leader of the 'Swift Parrot Recovery Plan' team. These eucalypts have been planted on the outer escarpment of the Creek corridor each year and it is hoped that, in the not-too-distant future, the Swift Parrot will begin to populate the Toyota Nature Reserve and along the Creek's full length within Hobsons Bay, if not beyond.

To date, no sightings of the endangered Swift Parrot have been observed but, with many of the eucalypts now flowering for the first time since planting, it is hoped that 'Swift' will soon become commonplace along the Kororoit Creek environmental corridor during Autumn and Winter, when the birds fly across Bass Strait from Tasmania looking for a friendly warmer climate and the nectar food source those very trees provide. The development of habitat for the endangered Swift Parrot along the Kororoit Creek has been one of FOLKC's proudest achievements.

Some of the other plans FOLKC is involved in implementing, include:

- Melbourne Water: 'Kororoit Creek Activity Plan (1997 & Revised 2004)'
- Parks Victoria: 'Linking People + Places Strategy (2001)'
- HBCC: 'Hosken Reserve Masterplan Draft (2011)'
- City West Water: 'Greening the West Strategic Plan (2013)'
- HBCC: 'Biodiversity Strategy Draft (2015)'
- HBCC: 'Western Melbourne Bicycle Strategy (2015)'

*Swift Parrot*  
*Photograph Courtesy:*  
*Chris Tzaros, Birds*  
*Bush and Beyond*



## TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned earlier, in 2001 FOLKC developed our own concept plan for the Kororoit Creek corridor within Hobsons Bay, which incorporated a shared trail link from Cherry Lake to Geelong Road, Brooklyn, linking the Hobsons Bay 'Bay Trail' to the 'Werribee Federation Trail' and the 'Metropolitan Trail Network'.

Shared trails are essentially forms of infrastructure that support multiple recreation and transportation opportunities, such as walking, bicycling and people in wheelchairs, but not motorbikes, using either the official roadway, or traversing pathways like ours along Kororoit Creek.

Over the following five years, FOLKC worked with government agencies and local government bodies to ensure that the plan for the shared trail along the full length of the Kororoit Creek corridor was incorporated cohesively into the overall 'Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy (2005 - 2030)', and that the concept for the Hobsons Bay section of the trail was detailed within the 'Hobsons Bay Kororoit Creek Masterplan' in 2006.

Some of the measures taken to establish the trail connection through Hobsons Bay, Wyndham and Brimbank are shown below. FOLKC has:

- ensured that the Barnes Road Bridge Development Committee included the Kororoit Creek shared trail into the Barnes Road Bridge structure;
- developed a concept plan of the shared trail link from Cherry Lake, Altona, to Geelong Road, Brooklyn;
- involved the Department of Infrastructure in the development of the 'Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy (2005 - 2030)', which incorporated the proposed plan for the shared trail;
- funded HBCC, through its sponsor Millers Inn, to commence the planning of a section of trail between Geelong Road and McArthurs Road;
- successfully lobbied the Victorian State Government to resume the development of the \$12.5M 'Federation Trail' between Werribee and Millers Road with a view to connecting the Brooklyn community to the Kororoit Creek Trail and, ultimately, to the Hobsons Bay 'Bay Trail' and 'Metropolitan Trail Network';
- obtained EPA Victoria funding through the Courts, and involved the local business community in landscaping the 'Federation Trail' between Geelong Road and Millers Road, Brooklyn;
- established a looped walking trail and continuous connection between Barnes and Geelong Roads, through a 'Vision for Werribee Plains' grant;

- incorporated a concept of the trail within the 'Hobsons Bay Hosken Reserve Draft Masterplan';
- established the concept and built part of a walking trail along the east side of the Creek between Hosken Reserve and McArthurs Road, below the proposed shared trail;
- commenced construction of a future looped walking trail on the east side of the Creek, between McArthurs Road and Barnes Road;
- obtained funding through 'Vision for Werribee Plains' grant for HBCC to design the shared trail between Geelong Road and Barnes Road;
- requested Brimbank City Council relocate the 'Federation Trail' overpass, to ensure the trail link to Geelong Road could be built;
- worked with Brimbank Council to design and landscape the shared trail from 'Federation Trail' into West Sunshine; and
- worked with Wyndham City Council to plan, build and landscape the shared trail from 'Federation Trail' to Geelong Road, through a 'Vision for Werribee Plains' grant.

FOLKC continues to lobby the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust to develop the walking trail between Grieve Parade and Dohertys Road, and thus allow completion of the walking track on the east side of the Creek between Geelong Road and Barnes Road.

*Proposed pathways along  
Kororoit Creek*





# ACTIVITIES

Planting days along the Kororoit Creek with FOLKC involve much more than simply planting a tree, then heading home. They are community celebration days, designed to be exciting, fulfilling and enjoyable, as well as to help to achieve tangible goals. Over the years, these celebrations have often included:

- a free BBQ prepared by Hobsons Bay service groups;
- free coffee, with espresso coffee a treat in the past two years;
- complimentary bottled water, soft drinks, chocolates and lollies;
- performances, entertainment and displays;
- a jumping castle for the children;
- face-painting (mainly for children); and
- giveaways, including 'National Tree Day' t-shirts, footballs, and so on.

Toyota, Melbourne Water and HBCC have been our major sponsors over the years, but many other industries and businesses have also contributed generously – see Appendix 1 for full details.

As well, community groups have volunteered many hours of their time and energy, bringing unique enjoyment to our tree planting program. Memorably, at one planting, the Greek community led the way and inspired FOLKC members to dance to 'Zorba' on the Creek banks, accompanied by Edvardo's piano accordion.

On occasion, we have had numerous celebrities attend our plantings, including Kevin Harrington, lead actor in the TV series 'Sea Change'; Gold Logie winner John Wood of 'Blue Heelers' fame; and Carlton Footballer Alex Jesaulenko. Lending us their extensive expertise have been Swift Parrot specialist, Chris Tzaros, as well as famed horticulturalist, Wes Fleming OAM, winner of the Chelsea Garden Show in 2013. Also honouring us with their presence over the years have been numerous past and present Members of Parliament.

Whilst the volunteers were busy planting trees, entertainers and environmentalists have often been out along the Creek with us, offering knowledgeable advice imbued with humour to ensure that planting trees is not simply a chore but also educating, and a lot



*"Zorba the Greek", FOLKC-style*



of fun. Some of these special guests have included entertainers Peter the Platypus, musician Robert Jackson, and Peter the Clown.

At one of our earlier plantings, Greek gardening guru Vasilli was on hand to advise and entertain. However, FOLKC has adopted our very own resident environmental entertainer, virtuoso accordionist Edvardo, who has entertained us for years and become a fantastic supporter of Kororoit Creek's revitalisation.

*Edvardo and his trusty accordion*

*Photography courtesy: Malcolm Hansford*



## NATIONAL TREE DAY

Toyota sponsorship of FOLKC has seen the Planet Ark 'National Tree Day (NTD)' develop as the major annual event along Kororoit Creek. The initial focus was rejuvenation of the forest on the so-called Toyota mound, below the Toyota Manufacturing Plant, but over the last five years, the event has grown to include the entire Creek environment throughout Altona North.

The celebration each year attracts many local people to the Creek corridor who have never had reason before to venture into this undiscovered Altona North gem. Over the past fourteen years, more than 2000 members of the community have planted more than 30,000 trees and shrubs, transforming this once-neglected environment back into our long-envisioned 'Corridor of Green'.

## CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Another important focus in the FOLKC calendar is 'Clean Up Australia Day', where FOLKC members meet at specific locations to remove accumulated litter and detritus. Over the past sixteen years, it is estimated that more than 20 tonnes of rubbish has been removed from on and near the banks of the Creek, the vast majority of it deposited during flooding when car tyres, plastic bottles and general litter are commonly washed into the waterway.

This has only highlighted the need for better community education and firmer policing of illegal rubbish dumping activities throughout Hobsons Bay's public spaces.



*"Oh, what a feeling!"  
National Tree Planting  
Day, Toyota-style*



*'National Tree Day' planting, 2013*



*FOLKC members knuckle down for 'Clean-Up Australia Day', 2009*





*Don't Rubbish Australia! – result of just one FOLKC annual clean-up*

## BUSHCARE'S MAJOR DAY OUT

Since 2013, FOLKC has embraced Bushcare's 'Major Day Out', which was established to engage local communities in the restoration of remnant bushland, to recruit new members to the environmental movement and to provide an opportunity for like-minded volunteers across Australia to socialise while getting their hands dirty!

*FOLKC members hard at work during Bushcare's Major Day Out*



*FOLKC clean-up maintenance after a massive 2004 flood*

## MAINTENANCE DAYS

While not the most beloved day on the FOLKC calendar, our Maintenance Day is always well attended by dedicated members. If we are not weeding or watering, we might be found preparing our future planting sites by mulching, drilling and water-crystalling the proposed planting holes, among numerous other essential tasks. It is a demanding job; however, the free BBQ is a welcome end to the day for all our many hungry and tired volunteers.

## MEETINGS

Committee Meetings are held regularly, originally at CRT Group Habitat Trust Offices but now relocated to the Explosive Reserve Homestead in Altona, and are always very well-attended by FOLKC volunteers. Generally, the meetings discuss past, present and future projects, as necessary.

Policy decisions made by government authorities and local industry activities – considering their likely impact on the overall corridor development – are also frequently up for discussion, in a bid to ensure these decisions and activities are always conducted in the best interests of our local Creek environment.

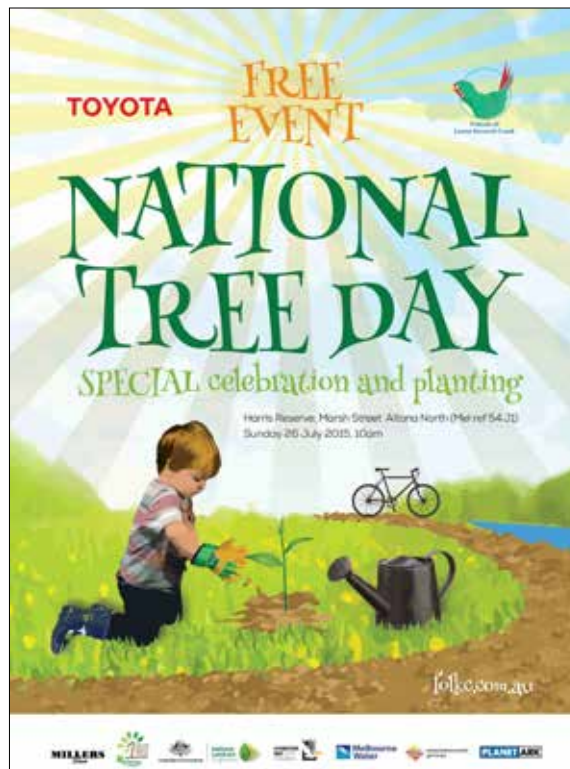


## ACTIVITIES PROMOTION

All the FOLKC planting activities are promoted using techniques which proved successful during my decades of involvement in local amateur theatre. Specifically, we have had success using the free publicity provided by supportive local newspaper articles and photographs, professional handbills and posters, and eye-catching public hoardings, along with direct mailing programs. However, overwhelmingly, 'word-of-mouth' has proven to be our best form of communication.

Our industry-quality posters, handbills and banners – are produced by FOLKC in-house and are also widely distributed throughout the local community, ensuring intending supporters are kept up-to-date with future FOLKC activities.

FOLKC also receives generous support from the 'Star Weekly' newspaper's management and staff, who graciously continue to publish articles and photographs of many of our activities and plantings. This, along with information published in the 'Hobsons Bay Ranger' newsletter, ensures the community is kept informed.



*FOLKC 'National Tree Day' poster, 2015*



*'National Tree Day' 2017 banner*

Our in-house website guru and life member, Dean Mitchelmore, has designed a vibrant link to the world through our folkc.com.au website, which contains massive amounts of archive and general information about FOLKC, as well as providing up-to-date news and alerts for our supporters and membership.

In the future, our plan is to make greater use of such social media as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to attract an even broader and more diverse group of participants to our activities.



*www.folkc.com.au official website home page*



# PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

## BARNES ROAD BRIDGE SHARED TRAIL PROJECT

In the late 1990s, I instigated development of the Barnes Road Bridge crossing over Kororoit Creek after demonstrating to the Victorian State Government how necessary it was to build this bridge in order to redirect heavy, dangerous truck traffic congestion out of the Altona North residential area onto a more appropriate bypass. As previously mentioned, it was my involvement in this Kororoit Creek bridge crossing process which first prompted my interest in improving the local Kororoit Creek corridor environment, and provided impetus for the ultimate establishment of FOLKC in 2001.

### Trail Development

After FOLKC had established its goals and developed its concept for the entire Kororoit Creek corridor within Hobsons Bay, I realised that, coincidentally, the Barnes Road Bridge would provide a Creek crossing point for the future Kororoit Creek Trail.

Through my involvement on the building committee of the Barnes Road Bridge Project, I initiated the construction of a “shared trail” crossing on the north side of the bridge structure – specifically for use once the shared trail from Cherry Lake to Geelong Road was eventually developed.

*Shared trail benefiting pedestrians & Kororoit Creek users over Barnes Road Bridge*



*Kororoit Creek's 'Threshold' by commissioned artist, Louise Lavarack*

### Bridge Art

During my time on the Bridge Committee, I also served on the ‘Hobsons Bay Barnes Road Bridge Arts Advisory Group’ in 2002, which was set up by HBCC to implement its policy of including artwork components in all large capital works projects. Notably, Louise Lavarack’s ‘Threshold’ artwork was one such example accepted as a suitable choice to complement the Barnes Road Bridge project, as described below:

*“... ‘Threshold’ consists of two sentinel groups of precisely aligned poles standing sentinel on either side of Kororoit Creek just upstream from Barnes Road Bridge in Altona North. All poles are approximately four metres high with the tops of both groups horizontally aligned across the creek. Each pole is painted in broad bands of alternating colours that recall the variegated patches of bark on the trunks and limbs of the river red gums that once dotted the creek course. Seen by a viewer moving along the shared path or over the bridge these bands form optical patterns that shift and change from order to chaos and back again. The individual-banded poles suggest flood markers or the segmented stems of the nearby reeds. The paired groupings of poles emphasise the idea of ‘gateposts’ marking the point of transition between the relative enclosure of the creek’s shallow valley and its wide floodplain nearer the bay. ‘Threshold’ operates on both experiential and intellectual levels to playfully engage the viewer, and to respectfully honour a particular place, its character and natural history.” – Louise Lavarack*



## ALTONA NORTH RESIDENTIAL ESCARPMENT & RIPARIAN DEVELOPMENT

Our very first planting was conducted in 2001 on the Blackshaws Road escarpment, with subsequent plantings downstream along the escarpment and riparian interface. Greening Australia, AMCOR and local community organisations joined with FOLKC to assist in these plantings during the first four years of FOLKC's existence.



*McArthur's Road  
riparian, 2002*



*McArthur's Road  
riparian, 2014*

Many volunteer hours were spent beautifying one particularly overgrown and neglected area along Kororoit Creek, but a massive storm in February 2005 knocked over many newly-established trees along the riparian. Subsequent plantings by FOLKC re-established the forested area and, today, it is a charming place to visit along a picturesque walking track below Blackshaws Road.

Countless working days were also invested in planting the Burgess Street drain, at its entry to the Creek. Unfortunately, the work done proved largely ineffective, as any heavy rain in the Brooklyn catchment transformed the drain into a raging torrent, washing away the planting. FOLKC realised that this area could not be successfully planted out until the overall flood impact upon the drain is reduced.

In 2005, John Street residents became involved in works along the embankment below their houses, after FOLKC invited them to join in a special planting celebration. A group of people from Donald – a small town in the Buloke Shire in Western Victoria – made the 120-km trip in support of FOLKC in this endeavour. FOLKC members, led by our Secretary Debbi Woods, reciprocated the support in 2006 when the Donald community was in the grip of a massive drought and needed urgent help. A 'Sister City' relationship between HBCC and Buloke Council was subsequently formed, which continues to this day.

*MP Nicola Roxon (centre) joins in planting with Geoff Mitchelmore & Debbi Woods*





## BOCCE ESCARPMENT & RIPARIAN DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the period from 2002 to 2008, FOLKC held many planting days and dramatically changed the environmental landscape in the area beneath Marsh Street, Altona North. Initially, FOLKC planted out an area at the bottom of McArthurs Road once full of weeds, rubbish and burnt-out cars, and frequented by drug users and others carrying out illicit activities. Only after a deliberately-lit fire swept through the area in 2003 did FOLKC realise the enormity of the issues which needed to be tackled in order to improve this much-neglected area's outlook. Thousands of cubic metres of clean-fill were used to drastically transform the area, with land contours completely altered and thousands of trees planted on-site. At the same time, a walking path below the Bocce Club was constructed, in preparation for the future development of the shared trail.

This area has now been radically transformed into a valuable community green space. A picnic table and seating have been installed and the site is now frequented by local community families and groups, allowing visitors to feel transported to the tranquillity of what seems for all the world like a bush wonderland setting, yet hidden only 10 kilometres from Melbourne's bustling CBD.

*Picnic Area looking upstream along Kororoit Creek, 2015*



*Before Marsh Street site works in 2003*



*Filling and excavation of the site*



*FOLKC 'Tree Day' planting results in 2004*



*Established forestation, 2014*



*Picnic Area looking downstream, 2015*



## TOYOTA NATURE RESERVE PROJECT

This project was devised by FOLKC, with the notion of transforming the unsightly Toyota 'mound' between Barnes Road and Dohertys Road into an attractive nature reserve. Initially the project was paid for, in part, through a Federal Government 'Envirofund' grant which financed the beginnings and initial development of the 'Toyota Nature Reserve', and specifically required the involvement of special community interest groups in any planned environmental activities.

The 'Toyota Nature Reserve Project' officially began in 2004, with the first Toyota sponsored 'National Tree Day' planting held at the Toyota mound. Many Hobsons Bay schools and special interest groups, including members of the Baha'i Faith, were invited to that first planting and HBCC and Melbourne Water (MW) held tutorials for the students on native plants and their importance, whilst a MW Waterwatch team showed the community participants some of the macro invertebrates which could be found around the Creek locale.

*Bayside students examining macro invertebrates  
under Melbourne Water's expert guidance*



*Darren Coughlin,  
CWW (Left) with  
Geoff, and Toyota's  
Chris Harrod.*

A 'Cultural Heritage Plan' was formulated for the Toyota site in 2008, including a proposed walking path funded through a DSE 'Vision for Werribee Plains' (V4WP) grant.

The proposed location of the path was investigated to ensure any local Aboriginal heritage was identified and preserved. Assisting FOLKC in this important process were Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) and BIOSIS Research, along with representatives of the four known Traditional Owners in the Hobsons Bay area (Boon Wurrung Foundation Limited, Bunurong Land and Sea Association Inc., Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc.).

The land for the path was excavated and filled as required by AAV guidelines, and an environmentally-appropriate crushed-rock looped path built commencing in 2009, and completed by early 2010.

*FOLKC  
members  
at work!*

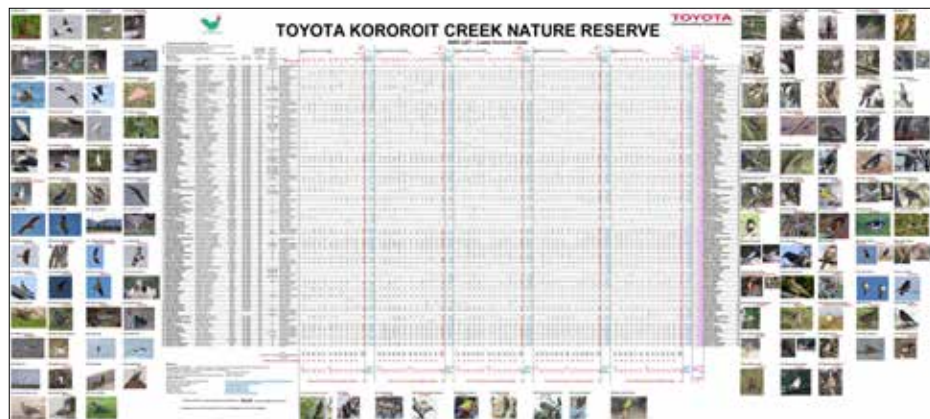




The 'Toyota Kororoit Creek Nature Reserve' was progressively developed over the next five years, with FOLKC members involved in extensive clearing, preparation and removal of the agistment fencing. Many of the plantings took place on Planet Ark 'National Tree Days' sponsored by Toyota and V4WP, in partnership with MW, Toll Group and HBCC.

More than 30,000 indigenous trees and shrubs were planted and our efforts saw the site transform from a weed-choked, otherwise sparsely-vegetated hill into a magnificent forest and thriving, healthy nature reserve. Some signage and fencing was established by HBCC and FOLKC through V4WP sponsorship, but more signage is still required to help visitors identify local flora and fauna.

Keen bird-watching FOLKC members have reported that, since prior to the site's development, bird populations have exponentially increased from an identified 35 species in 2004 to at least 136 in 2017 – see website or reserve signage for further details.



*Kororoit Creek 'Bird Survey' Results*



*Macquarie River Turtles soaking up the local Kororoit Creek sunshine*

The site has now been unofficially named by FOLKC as the 'Toyota Kororoit Creek Nature Reserve', and we hope that HBCC will eventually officially adopt this reserve name as a legacy to the generous support of the Toyota Motor Corporation of Australia in helping to create it. I am led to understand that this project is one of the biggest and longest-running environmental projects with which Toyota has ever been involved, anywhere in the world.





*A recent 'National Tree Day' on the historic Brooklyn Bluestone Bridge*

## BLUESTONE BRIDGE AREA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

During 'National Tree Day' 2013 and 2014, and on many FOLKC planting days over these past two years, the area surrounding the historic Brooklyn Bluestone Bridge has been planted out and a wetland established through more 'Vision for Werribee Plains' grant funding.

Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (GMCT) partnered with FOLKC in 2015 to develop the land below the Altona Memorial Park north of Grieve Parade, and a crushed brick walking path was built along the western side of the Creek to link the Bluestone Bridge with this busy local thoroughfare.

Plants and other materials were sourced through an MW grant made to FOLKC – only one of its numerous community support grants to our cause over the past seventeen years.

## WYNDHAM SHARED TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

In 2012, Brimbank City Council planned and built the concrete shared trail between Kororoit Creek in West Sunshine and the 'Federation Trail'. To complement the trail, FOLKC prepared and planted a triangular shaped site in Laverton North.



*Before works commenced*



*'Triangle site' in 2014*



During the construction phase, Brimbank altered the location of the trail interconnection to the Federation Trail to accommodate my plan for a single flowing link from 'Federation Trail' to Altona. With more funding from a 'Vision for Werribee Plains' (V4WP) grant, I had plans developed for a section of shared trail within Wyndham City, between the Federation Trail/Kororoit Creek Trail intersect and Geelong Road.

Generous thanks are due to Melbourne Water management, which helped resolve some of the difficult planning issues we encountered during this process. FOLKC was very pleased when Wyndham City Council generously agreed to fund the \$800,000 section of path, construction of which was completed in 2013. Several plantings along the new trail by FOLKC, including during 'National Tree Day' in 2013, gave the finishing touches to this vibrant new community asset.



*FOLKC planting along the trail, 2013*

'National Tree Day' was celebrated upon the historic Bluestone Bridge in 2013 with Wyndham City Councillor Peter Gibbons, Melbourne Water River Health Officer, Gerard Morel, and Anne Barker, Managing Director of City West Water, all on-site to congratulate the community for its efforts in helping transform this industrial section of the trail into a valuable and beautiful local resource.



*Planting partners on 'National Tree Day', 2013*

## ALTONA NORTH LANDFILL & SHARED TRAIL PROJECT

In the early 1990s, not-for-profit foundation 'Habitat Trust' – which had been researching and facilitating sustainable solutions for under-utilised and derelict sites across Melbourne – proposed to develop the disused bluestone quarry in Altona North for future use as an environmental garden. Habitat Trust had planned to develop a visionary 'Sound-and-Light' tourist attraction there, but in 1993, Altona North Landfill (ANL) bought the site with a view to developing it as a future industrial complex. The sale of the site was subject to a State Government '173 Environmental Agreement' – whereby ANL was required to return a designated parcel of this land, previously zoned for public park purposes (PPRZ), back to the Responsible Authority for community use.



*Altona Lions  
preparing a BBQ  
for the planters*



In 2015, FOLKC worked with ANL to plan and prepare part of this public open space for the 'National Tree Day' 2015 planting, after receiving a grant from the 'Greening the West (GtW)' project through its 'One Million Trees For The West' campaign (1MT). During our annual 'National Tree Day' celebration, this area was planted with 1500 trees and shrubs by more than 400 community volunteers.

In 2017, ANL applied for a further grant from the '1MT' Project to fund another 5000 indigenous trees and shrubs, and thus complete the open-space area-planting between McArthurs Road and Barnes Road. A walking path, like the path already on the Toyota mound on the west side of the Creek, was constructed as part of this project.



*Landfill site now transformed by FOLKC efforts*



*'National Tree Day' 2015 planting site – 18 months later at ANL site!*

## BROOKLYN LINK TO KOROROIT CREEK CORRIDOR

In 2012 and 2013, I managed two projects on behalf of the Brooklyn Residents Action Group (BRAG), in partnership with FOLKC, with the aim of planting out the 'Federation Trail' easement between Millers Road and Kororoit Creek in Brooklyn.

Stage 1 – between Geelong and Millers Roads, Brooklyn – was paid for with the help of EPA Victoria, after the courts ordered a Brooklyn industrial meat-processing plant to fund an environmental project, in lieu of paying a fine for polluting the neighbourhood.

HBCC designed the planting bed layouts for the area and FOLKC arranged the necessary site preparation and planting operations. Around 4000 indigenous trees, shrubs and ground covers were planted by paid local contractors, with the final 300 trees planted during a FOLKC 'Tree Planting Celebration' held on 17 June 2012.



The local community, businesses and the City Council, along with EPA management and staff, attended our celebration of this trail section's transformation into an amazing new community park. HBCC has maintained this area, and connected North and South Brooklyn to the park by establishing formal links from North Brooklyn into Duane Reserve – an outstanding result for the entire Brooklyn residential community, and local wildlife and flora.

In 2013, on behalf of BRAG, I invited local industry to contribute towards continuing this section of the development of 'Federation Trail' to Kororoit Creek, as Stage 2 of the project linking the Brooklyn community to the Creek trail. Some 10,000 cubic metres of fill and soil was imported onto the site and the area planted out with indigenous trees and shrubs by local contractors, then given substantial green finishing touches by the local community at another successful – if not damp! – planting celebration event. VicRoads recently took responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of this section of the trail and further plantings are being planned by a VicRoads environmental group through the '1MT' project.

*BRAG Executive Laurie Bell (left) and Bert Boere assisting MP Wade Noonan*



*Federation Trail Park celebrations, 2012*





## URBAN FOREST AND PATH DEVELOPMENT

In 1983, Altona City Council partnered with Smorgon Steel in planting two sections of an old City of Altona tip site, located on the east and west sides of Grieve Parade along Kororoit Creek in Altona North. Unfortunately, the two sites were planted with trees during a drought and never watered or otherwise maintained, resulting in an unnecessary massive loss of trees and a failed project.

In 2016, FOLKC sought and obtained funding through Greening the West's '1 Million Trees (1MT)' program – which forms part of the Federal Government's larger '10 Million Trees' Project – to plant 1250 new indigenous trees and shrubs on the east section of this neglected site. After site clean-up by HBCC Parks Department and FOLKC members, the entire area was mulched with donated wood chips and a looped walking path laid down. The works were also paid for, in part, through Melbourne Water's 'Community Grants' program. On 29 July 2016, 30 DELWP officers joined FOLKC to plant 400 indigenous trees on the site's eastern section. And on 31 July 2016, FOLKC conducted its annual Toyota-sponsored 'National Tree Day' celebration on the site, during which more than 300 Hobsons Bay community volunteers planted a further 1000 indigenous trees and large shrubs, restoring the east side to its original vision.

This 'Urban Forest' site's western section was subsequently restored during FOLKC's 'National Tree Day' 2017 planting, also funded in part by the 1MT program.

*Restored eastern 'Urban Forest' planting at Old Altona Tip site, 2016*



## TOYOTA TRAIL AND ARTWORK PROJECT

**Trail:** Before ultimately leaving Altona North following the closure of its local manufacturing plant, Toyota management was keen to leave a legacy to the community from which so many of its employees had been drawn over its existence here. Toyota also wanted to show appreciation to FOLKC for the transformation of the Creek corridor, which FOLKC had carried out in partnership with them for more than 14 years – a visionary environmental alliance that is one of the biggest with which the Toyota Motor Corporation has ever been involved, throughout its extensive global operations.

When Toyota management approached me in 2015 and asked for FOLKC suggestions about what form this legacy might take once the car manufacturing plant closed, I proposed that the construction of a 700-metre section of shared path linking Geelong Road to Blackshaws Road in Altona North would be a very worthwhile community asset to add to the local Kororoit Creek green corridor.

Construction of this section would link Altona North and Brooklyn into the shared trail network, further stimulating community interest in the area and, hopefully, convincing HBCC to consider building the trail's final section all the way into Altona, which would link the 'Metropolitan Trail Network' into the Hobsons Bay trails we have helped develop.

Toyota, however, had a far grander legacy in mind and ultimately contributed an amazing \$1.8 million to fund not only this section, but the whole remaining shared path from Geelong Road to Barnes Road, along the eastern side of the Creek. Toyota hoped to see the existing looped walking trail on the western side of the Creek link up to Geelong Road, thus creating another fully looped trail and giving the community a chance to safely and easily explore the entire Altona North corridor along both sides of Kororoit Creek. Mike Rausa, Toyota Australia Corporate Services Executive Director, announced the legacy project at FOLKC's 'National Tree Day' Celebration in 2015.

Completion of the Barnes Road to Cherry Lake section of the trail network along Kororoit Creek is likely to take a considerable length of time, however, as issues related to tunnelling under Geelong's high speed railway lines prove both complex and expensive, and require agreement and co-operation between many relevant government authorities. Nevertheless, FOLKC believes that completion of the trail will begin once the Toyota legacy path is finished, and final connection of the trail all the way to Cherry Lake will ultimately happen, with or without FOLKC's input.



**Artwork:** Artwork to be installed alongside Kororoit Creek also forms part of the Toyota legacy trail development project – a stunning feature which will highlight Toyota's involvement throughout the years when its manufacturing plant operated in Altona North, and provide a lasting testament to the legacy it now leaves behind.



## KOROROIT CREEK TRAIL COMPLETION PLAN

Following Toyota Australia's injection of \$1,800,000 into the trail's future development in Altona North, I requested that the Victorian State Government – through Member for Williamstown and State Minister for Industry, Employment and Resources, Wade Noonan MP – consider funding a further part of the shared trail within Altona North. In June 2016, the government responded to my request and announced its plan to co-sponsor the 'Toyota Legacy Project' through a \$650,000 grant. Jill Hennessy MP, Minister for Health and Member for Altona, made the announcement of the grant which was sourced through the State's 'Community Sports Infrastructure' fund.



*Minister for Health Jill Hennessy MP at 2016 'Toyota Legacy' grant announcement with Hobsons Bay CEO Chris Eddy and Deputy Mayor Sandra Wilson*

HBCC subsequently included \$817,000 for the path funding in its 2016/17 Annual Budget. This total of \$3.3 million ensured completion of the trail between Barnes Road and Blackshaws Road, and the finalisation of the trail's design between Blackshaws Road and Geelong Road. The Toyota shared trail legacy to the Altona North community was completed just in time for our local 2017 'National Tree Day' celebration.



In early 2016, FOLKC joined with HBCC in requesting that the Federal Government consider funding the final section of trail between Barnes Road and Cherry Lake. The Toyota legacy project motivated HBCC to seek this federal funding and ensure an outcome that FOLKC has sought since its inception in 2001. I also personally lobbied the Federal Government, through our local federal Member for Gellibrand Tim Watts MP, to ensure this most vital section of the trail could finally be realised.

Now we can look forward to the completion of the gap in the Kororoit Creek Trail between Blackshaws and Geelong Roads, thanks to the recent announcement by Transurban Group, who will fund it in partnership with the Andrews State Government. Building on the work of FOLKC, this part of the Kororoit Creek environmental corridor will be enhanced with signage and planted with hundreds of new trees, shrubs and grasses, to improve the health and habitat of the area.

Our special 'National Tree Day' 2017 Planting Celebration on 30 July 2017 saw the official opening of the first two stages of the shared trail between Barnes Road and Blackshaws Road.

*Artist impression of Kororoit Creek Trail  
Courtesy of City of Hobsons Bay*



*The Spirit of Water*



*Spirit Ladder*

*Geoffrey Ricardo  
is a Melbourne  
based artist  
who essentially  
employs a  
figurative  
based narrative  
language.*





# COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

## GOVERNMENT

### Department of Sustainability & Environment

Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy (2005 – 2030): In 2001, I requested the State Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to consider developing a 'Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy (KCRS)'. DSE agreed to provide \$250,000 to fund the strategy and, over the next two years, I participated in its development, with my input being recognised in the strategy documents quoted below:

*"(ii) Acknowledgements: The project group would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who provided knowledge and input throughout the preparation of the Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy 2005 – 2030. In particular, we thank Geoff Mitchelmore and representatives of the various Friends Groups associated with the creek who provided invaluable assistance in the identification of issues along the waterway as well as inspiring us with their passion to see the creek revitalized."*

Local Government Sustainability Accord Fund: The development of the KCRS, and its implementation courtesy of a 'Local Sustainability Accord Funding' grant, then became the major driver of further expansion of our Kororoit Creek green environment. This was managed by the KCRS Steering Committee, comprising officers from Wyndham, Brimbank, Melton and Hobsons Bay City Councils, and members from the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water, along with the Friends of Kororoit Creek and myself, representing FOLKC.

Vision for Werribee Plains Project: In September 2008, the Victorian Government committed to investing in environmental projects in Melbourne's West through the 'Vision for Werribee Plains (V4WP)' project. I was asked to represent the local community on the Grant Selection Panel. Headed by Project Manager Max Coster and Project Officer Vivian Amenta, this panel was comprised of state and local government representatives, and chaired by MPs Michael Crutchfield and Andrew Elsbury. Serving on this committee for four years, I helped determine projects suitable to meet 'V4WP's goals. Numerous exciting projects were financed and realised through this rewarding grants process, which ultimately invested more than \$10 million towards greening Melbourne's West. FOLKC itself had three specific projects funded via V4WP, which substantially helped develop Kororoit Creek's green corridor environs.

### Environment Protection Authority Victoria

Brooklyn Community Reference Group: Since 2005, I have represented the local Altona North and Brooklyn communities at the EPA Victoria-convened Brooklyn Community Reference Group. Later, I also joined the associated Brooklyn Residents Action Group to assist in the resolution of many local environmental issues, some of which had a direct impact on the Kororoit Creek environmental corridor.

Compliance and Enforcement Policy: During 2011, I was asked to help monitor the roll out of an EPA Victoria 'Compliance and Enforcement' Policy, developed by its newly-convened management team with Chairman Cheryl Batagol and former Chief Executive Officer John Merritt at the head.

As one of a small group of activists involved in environmental issues within our local communities over a substantial length of time, I was asked with my fellow activists to travel throughout Victoria with EPA Officers. The aim of this group was primarily to ensure that EPA policy, and local obligations under it, were correctly and fully communicated to each community. On-going quarterly meetings with EPA Officers and management have continued, where EPA policy issues and new programs being rolled out are discussed and planned in detail.



*"This is how to plant a tree, Daddy!"*

## VicRoads

Community Liaison Group: Thanks to VicRoads Chief Executive Officer John Merritt, new VicRoads policy has been introduced which ensures better liaison with the local community on issues pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of VicRoads, when planning green projects. I have recently begun representing FOLKC at meetings with the VicRoads' Environment Group, which, among its purview, oversees transport-related issues impacting the local Kororoit Creek environment. Two projects presently underway because of this policy involve resolving problematic, persistent drainage issues which continue to impact on the walking path to the Creek's west side, near Grieve Parade.

## City West Water

Greening the West Project: The 'Greening the West' project (GtW) was an initiative set up by City West Water to help deliver "positive health and social outcomes" through the provision of a greener urban landscape across Melbourne's West. A committee was established to work with a range of partners from local councils, water corporations, government agencies, industry and community groups, and I was very pleased to be asked to represent FOLKC on the GtW Committee in 2013.



1 Million Trees for the West of Melbourne: As part of the GtW initiative, a grant was sought through the Federal Government's 'Five Million Trees' Project and GtW subsequently received \$5 Million funding to plant a million trees across the West of Melbourne by 2018. I was seconded to the '1 Million Trees for the West' Project Steering Committee upon its inception in 2014.

The '1 Million Trees (1MT) for the West' project was officially launched in 2015 by Federal Minister for Environment Greg Hunt MP on the banks of Kororoit Creek, at FOLKC's 2015 'National Tree Day' Celebration site.



*HBCC Cr Sandra Wilson and LeadWest CEO Craig Rowley at the launch*

Project Co-ordinator Craig Rowley, CEO of LeadWest, stated during the launch: "The One Million Tree Project will not only bring together groups from across the landscape, but it will also provide the broader community with a visible improvement to suburban parks, creek corridors and open space."



*Environment Minister Greg Hunt planting the first of '1 Million Trees' for Melbourne's West*





*Mobil Planting Day with FOLKC, 2004*

## INDUSTRY

- Toyota Community Liaison Committee 2004 – 2012
- Mobil Community Liaison Committee 2004 – 2016
- Monsanto Community Liaison Committee 2002 – 2003
- CRT Group/Habitat Trust + Barnes Road Bridge Construction Committee 2000 – 2002

Over the years, I have represented FOLKC on the Mobil, Toyota and Monsanto Community Liaison Committees. I was also involved with the CRT Group in solving its transport congestion and access problems, which resulted in the building of the \$4.5 million Barnes Road Bridge over Kororoit Creek, incorporating a section of the future shared trail upon the bridge's structure.

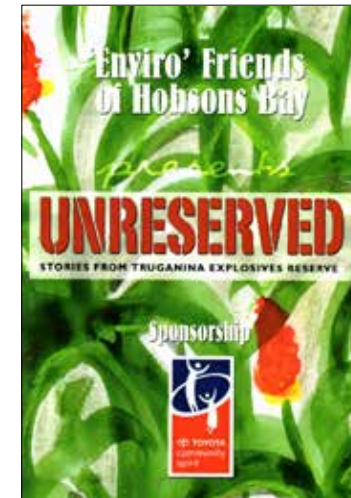
As well, I have been involved with the Altona Memorial Park, CRT Group, Altona North Landfill & Toll Group in managing their land issues. This involvement directly resulted in Toll Holdings and Altona North Landfill returning their full requirements of 'Public Park & Recreation' zoned land to HBCC for community use. FOLKC has also requested CRT Group and Mobil Altona Refinery to consider donating the sections of their land which has been designated by the State Government for community use.

While some matters remain unresolved, it is fair to say that FOLKC has over the years successfully promoted to these industries the need for them to assist in Kororoit Creek's local green corridor development, and has successfully achieved co-operation and support from all of them.

## COMMUNITY

Enviro Friends of Hobsons Bay: Around 2004, 'Friends of Greenwich Bay' President, Annie Link, and I met with several Hobsons Bay 'Friends' groups to discuss the fact that each of our organisations wrestled with similar issues while undertaking our environmental activities. Because of these discussions, we decided that forming one umbrella organisation would streamline our activities and mean that our issues could be tackled and resolved at a single meeting with government bodies, rather than each group having to resolve these problems in prolonged isolation. The 'Enviro Friends of Hobsons Bay (EFHB)' was formed and, over the next few years, this joint activism saw many issues resolved and several grants secured which enabled equipment to be bought for the 'Toyota Tool Trailer' – an aid to all local 'Friends' groups in our planting and maintenance activities. EFHB was chaired by Hobsons Bay City Council Ranger Michelle Gooding and, in 2007, our group was recognised by the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority as an "excellent management model". EFHB operated successfully until 2008, when HBCC officers decided that the group had "outlived its usefulness"!

Among its visionary activities, EFHB presented a very successful outdoor cinema extravaganza event that was held at the Truganina Explosives Reserve in 2005. Films about the history of the Reserve were screened, including stories about its working life, family populations and its unique flora and fauna. I personally produced and directed this event, which was very generously sponsored by the 'Toyota Community Spirit' program and attracted an audience of more than 200 environmental enthusiasts.



*'UNRESERVED'  
production program, 2005*

# SUPPORTERS

## MILLERS INN

In 2002, after HBCC had decided not to fund the 'Hobsons Bay Kororoit Creek Masterplan (HBKCM)', I approached General Manager of Millers Inn, Stewart Naismith, who subsequently volunteered to fund the masterplan in the interests of launching FOLKC's concepts for Kororoit Creek from ideas into reality.

The popular gaming venue's management was very pleased to be part of the FOLKC plan and indicated an interest in continuing to sponsor FOLKC activities into the future. This funding proved to be the first of many annual sponsorship packages FOLKC has received from Millers Inn over the years – a sponsorship that has allowed our group great flexibility in responding to local environmental needs, and to better be able to plan and develop activities, free of the usual financial constraints. Financing FOLKC's purchase of our own vehicle is just one example of the way in which Millers Inn's support has significantly and meaningfully improved our autonomy and functionality since our partnership formed.

Once the Millers Inn cheque for the masterplan had been presented to HBCC, the council agreed to co-fund the development of the HBKCM. The masterplan was finally adopted as official policy in 2006. Our first HBKCM planting sponsored by Millers Inn was held in 2002, when FOLKC volunteers planted trees, shrubs, groundcovers and wetland plants all along the Burgess Street tributary.



*Millers Inn General Manager Stewart Naismith (left) with HBCC Mayor Bill Baarini in 2007*



*FOLKC's Millers Inn sponsored Toyota 4WD-ute*

Millers Inn's continuing FOLKC sponsorship has allowed us the freedom to allocate funds to expedite projects, whereas time and money constraints have slowed the processes of many other Friends Groups in Hobsons Bay. Our sponsored ability to order special equipment and employ additional labour for work beyond the scope and capability of FOLKC members has been vital to the success of our group.

In 2004, Millers Inn sponsorship allowed FOLKC to buy its first off-road vehicle – a second-hand Toyota Hilux Four-Wheel Drive utility truck.

This truck revolutionised FOLKC's activities in and around the Kororoit Creek green corridor, allowing us vehicular access with necessary tools and materials into areas previously only accessible if we paid to hire a specialised vehicle, freeing up enormous chunks of our budgets for projects.

Each year, FOLKC has presented our annual 'Ray Blythman Memorial Life Membership' awards and celebrated our successes at Christmas with dinners held at Millers Inn, as part of the sponsorship package.

FOLKC has been enormously proud and privileged to have had Millers Inn as its major sponsor over these many years, and we acknowledge and thank Stewart Naismith and the management for their on-going support and belief in the work our organisation has accomplished for the local community. It is fair to say that, without Millers Inn, FOLKC may not have been able to achieve as much as we have done along the Kororoit Creek environmental corridor.





*The beauty of nature's gifts along the lower  
Kororoit Creek "stream", 2015*

## MELBOURNE WATER

Throughout the 1900s, the then-Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) – now Melbourne Water (MW) – regarded waterways like Kororoit Creek as little more than drainage channels, which it engineered to direct flood waters out of Melbourne into Port Phillip Bay as rapidly as possible before they posed any major problems to residents and businesses. Fortunately, in recent years, Melbourne Water has ultimately recognised that this is not best practice and has moved to return the waterways under its control to as near to a natural setting as possible, within an urban environment.

Prior to FOLKC's inception in 2001, Melbourne Water relied upon its 'Melbourne Water Activity Plan Draft (1995)' as a guide to any works along the Kororoit Creek corridor. Drainage has always been its primary concern – conservation works (both maintenance and capital works) were likely only ever prioritised according to any related environmental concerns as they were identified; for example, the presence of an endangered species or remnant vegetation would have secondarily influenced how MW conducted works within natural waterways.

By 2005, it became obvious that the Kororoit Creek corridor was not considered to be an important waterway, when Kororoit Creek was completely excluded from being recognised as an official "stream" within the 'Melbourne Water Regional River Health

Strategy'. Thankfully, with the help of a lot of pressure from FOLKC, it was finally recognised as a stream and reinstated in the study.

Over the years, changes applied within Melbourne Water's organisation and practices have seen far greater emphasis placed upon better management of the natural waterways. This has led to a massive spike in the number of tree and vegetation plantings, more money and effort spent on ground works and much better organisational understanding of our local environment.

Melbourne Water has spent nearly \$2 million on conservation-orientated capital works along the stretch of lower Kororoit Creek between Sunshine and Hobsons Bay since 2010. As well, over the last several years, Melbourne Water has placed much more importance upon working in 'partnership' with the local community – a dramatic policy change which has resulted in a remarkable, visible improvement of the Kororoit Creek green corridor's health and overall cohesive, beneficial developments.

MW River Health Officer, Gerard Morel, has been nothing less than an inspiration to all 'Friends' Groups in Hobsons Bay. It is important to note that Gerard's steersmanship of the 'Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy' has been largely an extracurricular role, completed in what should be his spare leisure time, due to his special and devoted interest in the restoration and future development of Kororoit Creek's green environment.

Melbourne Water – through its 'River Health Incentive Scheme' aimed at funding the work of community groups – has partnered FOLKC each year for the past 15 years by supporting many of our planting and waterway projects. MW has awarded more than \$900,000 in grants to FOLKC for these purposes since 2007. There is still a long way to go in developing Kororoit Creek as a major waterway in Melbourne's West but, with the ongoing support of Melbourne Water, the future looks far more optimistic.

*MW River Health Officer  
Gerard Morel hard at  
work with FOLKC  
members at Kororoit Creek*





## HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

When HBCC became involved with FOLKC in the early days of our formation in 2001, it believed that – like most ‘Friends of’ groups – FOLKC had been set up solely to plant trees along the degraded Kororoit Creek corridor. In line with its policy relating to such community groups as ours, HBCC assumed the supervision and management of all aspects of our group’s operation but had no interest in the development of the corridor outside those tree planting activities.

I very soon realised that, to bring our full vision for Kororoit Creek to fruition, FOLKC needed to take control of all its own operational decisions and later, to expedite them, involve government bodies and other business and industry organisations in our plans and on-ground operations.

After the development of the Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy (2005 – 2030) by Department of Sustainability and Environment, HBCC and FOLKC – via the sponsorship of Millers Inn – jointly funded the development of the Hobsons Bay Kororoit Creek Masterplan (2006).

Another grant, which was obtained by FOLKC through DSE’s ‘Vision for Werribee Plains’ fund, involved HBCC in the development of the Kororoit Creek shared trail plan from Geelong Road, Brooklyn, to Barnes Road, Altona North. Unfortunately, at the time, HBCC believed that the building of a trail along the Creek within Hobsons Bay would be too difficult and expensive, so nothing came of these initial plans for the trail.

However, by 2012, FOLKC’s activities along the Creek had persuaded HBCC that there was a case to be made for the development of the Kororoit Creek trail from Geelong Road, Brooklyn, to Cherry Lake, Altona, and the resulting interconnection of this trail to the Bay Trail. It recognised that this development would ultimately be of great benefit to the Hobsons Bay community and visitors to the area. However, at the time, funding was not available through HBCC budgets. Plans stalled until Toyota’s community partnership with FOLKC inspired the company to grant \$1.8 million in 2015 to connect the trail from Barnes Road to Geelong Road, as a legacy to the local community.

Consequently, HBCC and FOLKC joined forces to secure \$650,000 supplementary funding from the State Government through the ‘Community Sports Infrastructure Fund’. HBCC also contributed \$817,000 through its 2016/17 capital budget to assist in the completion of the Barnes Road to Geelong Road section. To add to this, with support from FOLKC, HBCC applied to the Federal Government for additional

funding to allow for completion of the full Kororoit Creek Trail within Hobsons Bay.

The council now shares our vision that, once this important infrastructure within Hobsons Bay is complete and linked to existing trails, all the wonderful and unique environmental and historical features of our city will finally be accessible to those who venture along the greater Metropolitan Trail Network.

HBCC has also been a major contributor to FOLKC in our planting activities over the past seventeen years, allocating more than \$300,000 towards on-ground support, cleaning and maintaining the lower Kororoit Creek corridor.

The involvement at most of our functions of HBCC Parks Department team members – most especially Park Rangers Andrew Webster, Frank Fardel, Libby Rigby, Michelle Gooding and Susie Inglis (shown below) – have been of great benefit to FOLKC’s on-going success and developing expertise. FOLKC also recognises the great support it has had from HBCC Parks Manager Ian Brown over the years.



*Frank Fardel, Andrew Webster with Edvardo*



*Parks Ranger Michelle Gooding*



*Parks Ranger Libby Rigby*



*Parks Ranger Susie Inglis*



## TOYOTA AUSTRALIA

In the early 1990s, Toyota Australia built a mound and planted a forest between its manufacturing plant operation and Kororoit Creek, as a natural buffer designed to ensure its car building operations did not impact on health and amenity within the local Altona North community. Unfortunately, due to poor maintenance and drought, the forest area planting failed and the well-intentioned buffer became a weed-infested mound where only horse agistment was permitted, which in turn impacted on the Creek's water quality.

Late in 1990s, Toyota donated the land between Kororoit Creek and its manufacturing plant boundary to Hobsons Bay City. This land was then designated as a Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) by council and later preserved with an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO), ensuring that this land would remain publicly-owned in perpetuity, for community use.

Around 2002, the Toyota Manufacturing Plant in Altona North appealed to the local community to become involved in its newly-established Community Liaison Committee (CLC). As well as wanting to be recognised as a good environmental citizen, Toyota wished to assure the public that its manufacturing plant was not having any adverse local impact.

As a member of the local Altona North community, I joined the CLC and soon recognised that there was a potential golden (or green) opportunity to involve Toyota as a partner with FOLKC, in our goal to restore and protect the natural lower Kororoit Creek environment. As a major sponsor of Planet Ark's 'National Tree Day', Toyota seemed a perfect fit for partnership with FOLKC to help us turn 'National Tree Day' along the local Kororoit Creek corridor into an even bigger environmental celebration.

Over the following two years, FOLKC removed agistment fencing and prepared the Toyota mounded area for planting, and for the future placement of a looped walking trail.

In 2004, Toyota commenced what turned out to be an enduring environmental partnership with FOLKC, eventually becoming our major partner and supporter. This partnership has brought about an amazing and clearly-visible change to the local Kororoit Creek corridor.

Over the course of the next five years, the mound was planted out with thousands of indigenous trees and shrubs, and a crushed-brick looped walking path was also built by FOLKC in partnership with Toyota, through funding from the Federal Government's 'Enviro Fund' and the State Government's 'Vision for Werribee Plains' project grants. Toyota also donated a Toyota Hilux 4WD to FOLKC, which has been invaluable in carrying out some of our more arduous environmental activities.

Today a three-kilometre walking path in a magnificent forest setting showcases the Kororoit Creek within the Toyota Nature Reserve, a wonderful legacy for the community to use and enjoy. Thousands of birds visit this magnificent forest and the number of species of birds observed has risen from 35 in 2005 to 136 in 2017.

FOLKC hopes that its enduring partnership with Toyota Australia and the local natural environment continues into the future.

Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek salutes Toyota Management and its Environment Team for the support given to it over the past fourteen years.

*Toyota funded  
Display Board  
Photography courtesy  
Chris Tzaros, Birds,  
Bush and Beyond*



## MOBIL ALTONA REFINERY

Mobil's Altona Refinery has been a long-time supporter of FOLKC and has often pitched-in along the Creek at our planting activities. Mobil has also extended numerous grants over the years, enabling us to buy specialised equipment allowing FOLKC to significantly improve our environmental outcomes. Our specialised wildlife camera and telephoto lenses have allowed the full realisation of our 'Bird Survey' data, and meant that our photographer Len Towerzey could produce the vividly-detailed bird and wildlife photo galleries required for FOLKC's website and our on-site Kororoit Creek corridor display boards.



*FOLKC photographer  
Len Towerzey 'off  
with the birds' at  
Kororoit Creek*

*FOLKC's all-weather  
Kororoit Creek  
wildlife display board*



*FOLKC continues to be surprised and delighted by the unfailing community spirit and dedication on display from all sectors, ages and skill sets within our local community, whenever we schedule environmental activities along Kororoit Creek*



# PLANET ARK

For the past 14 years, FOLKC has been associated with Planet Ark through our hosting of Australia's largest and most popular community tree-planting event, 'National Tree Day'. Tree Day provides an opportunity for participants to do something positive for the local environment as well as their community, and to reconnect with nature in an intimate and satisfying way.

Since 2004, in partnership with Planet Ark's official 'National Tree Day' sponsor, Toyota Australia, FOLKC has celebrated and improved the local Kororoit Creek environment with more than:

- 3000 community members in attendance;
- 30,000 indigenous trees and shrubs planted;
- 1000kgs sausages & hot dogs consumed;
- 300 loaves of bread eaten;
- 3000 litres of hot and cold drinks consumed;
- 1000 'National Tree Day' t-shirts distributed by Toyota to the planting volunteers; and
- 1,000,000s of giggles and barrel-loads of fun courtesy of entertainers like Kororoit Creek's very own accordion virtuoso Edvardo and many other environmentally-dedicated professional performers.

Our partnership with Planet Ark's 'National Tree Day' and the sponsorship of Toyota Australia has allowed FOLKC to attract more than 3000 participants from the community over the past fifteen years and has seen them plant more than 30,000 indigenous trees and shrubs along the Kororoit Creek corridor. This is an outstanding achievement for the local area and amenity by anyone's measure, let alone for our natural environment and local ecology. Altona North is a far healthier and much more attractive place for residents, native wildlife and flora in 2016 than it was at the turn of the millennium, when it was viewed as little more than a stinky, unsightly "drain".



*Merridee & Leigh Hardinge*



*Liza & Graham Watts*



*Brendan Dowling*



*Betsy Dunne*



*Linda Hogan*



*Tony Poulter*



*Evi Palmer*



*Rayner family*



*Ghorghe Boere*



*Jenny Picci*



*Dean Mitchelmore*



*Carol Baker*



*Kristen Mitchelmore*



*Andy Calvert*



*Jennifer & Allan Williams*



## COMMUNITY

The outstanding successes that have occurred along lower Kororoit Creek have essentially been due to the support our organisation has had from the local community and the volunteer members of FOLKC. From our very first meeting, the people have embraced our vision to restore and develop the local Kororoit Creek corridor, and more than risen to the opportunities that were on offer.

FOLKC members have given outstanding service to FOLKC and many have been presented with the 'Ray Blythman Memorial Life Membership Award' since its inception. The inaugural members of FOLKC and those members who have received a life membership award are listed in full in Appendix 5.

A very special mention must be made of long-serving FOLKC executive committee members Vice President Simon Hogan, Treasurer Laurie McCauley and Secretary Debbi Woods. They have all worked above-and-beyond-the-call to ensure that the goals we set in 2001 were fully realised. Three long serving dedicated members, Kerry Cordell, Ken Daley, and Len Towerzey, must also be mentioned as they, too, have sacrificed so much of their personal time towards special FOLKC projects to ensure the successful achievement of our group's goals.



*FOLKC member Kerry  
Cordell (Right) with Geoff  
at Toyota planting, 2004*



*Ken Daley installing  
bird boxes*



*FOLKC Treasurer  
Laurie McCauley taking  
a break from the books!*

*Co-writer and editor,  
Olga Mitchelmore*



*Fay and Simon Hogan and Debbi  
Woods (right) Caught in the Act!!*





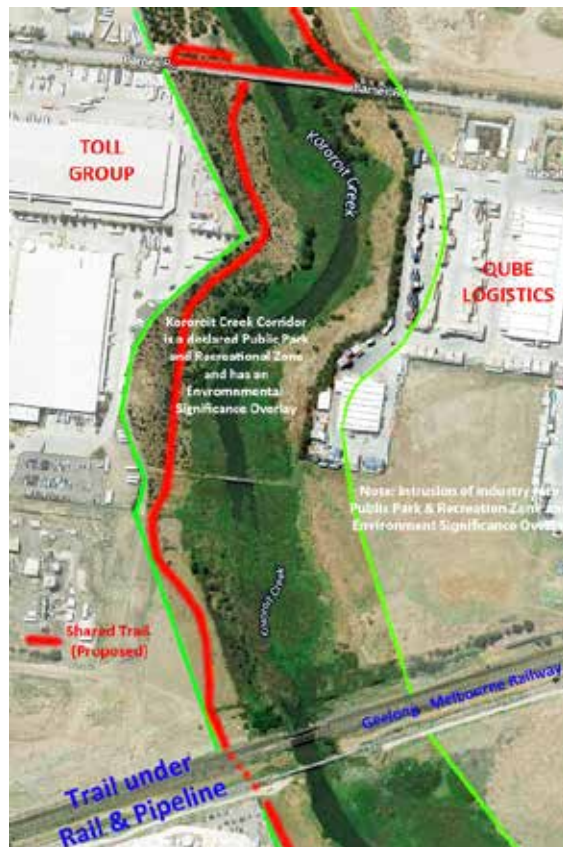
# ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

## CONNECTING THE SHARED TRAIL FROM BARNES ROAD TO CHERRY LAKE

The trail connection between Barnes Road and Cherry Lake is the most difficult and expensive section of the shared trail in Hobsons Bay as it has several formidable, but not impossible, obstacles.

### Stage 4 (Barnes Road to Kororoit Creek Road):

This section houses the two biggest issues impacting the completion of this section of trail - the need to tunnel underneath the Geelong/Melbourne railway line, and to pass under or over the oil pipelines.



*Stage 4 – Barnes Road to Kororoit Creek Road*



*Proposed tunnel beneath the Melbourne-Geelong Railway line*

These challenges need to be resolved at the highest level of expertise, as the integrity of the trail connection has both Federal and State Government economic implications, not to mention local ones. The works will be technically-difficult and expensive, and will need to be closely-monitored to ensure the safety and integrity of the railway during construction. This can only be carried out by the relevant authorities, in co-operation with each other.

While investigating the final trail construction in this area, due consideration must really be given to resolving the on-going issue of the Creek's restricted water flow into Port Phillip Bay, caused by an unworkable, narrow opening below the VicTrack rail bridge, east of the proposed tunnelling works. This matter, which continues to cause problems upstream and prevents the continuation of the shared walking/cycling path, could easily be remedied as part of these works.

*Restricted VicTrack rail bridge opening*

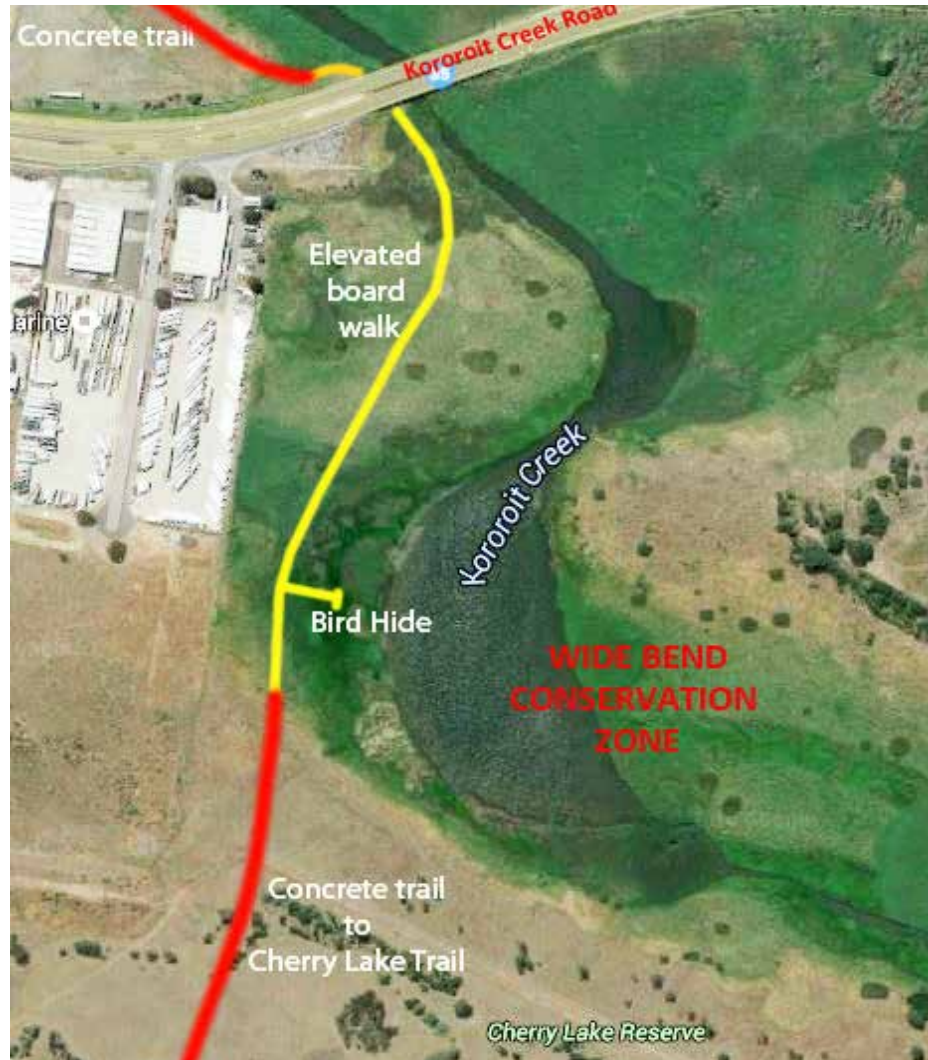




### Stage 5 (Kororoit Creek Road to Cherry Lake):

This section requires the trail to pass under Kororoit Creek Road, a complex but manageable project which would only duplicate many similar crossings seen along the 'Metropolitan Trail Network'. After completing flora/fauna studies for this area in 2007, Melbourne Water recommended that – once it had passed under Kororoit Creek Road – the trail could continue through the wetland upon an attractive elevated boardwalk before connecting to the Cherry Lake trail.

*Stage 5 – Kororoit Creek Road to Cherry Lake*



I lobbied the Federal Government through our local representative, Tim Watts MP, for support and, in early 2016, FOLKC joined with HBCC in formally requesting that the government consider funding this difficult final section of trail between Barnes Road and Cherry Lake.

The suggested ancillary works required to facilitate connecting lower Kororoit Creek's green corridor all the way through to Cherry Lake – onto an ultimate connection with the 'Metropolitan Trail Network' – are necessary local improvements required by the community, one way or another. Fully completing this project will take care of these urgent capital works, at the same time allowing the Melbourne 'Metropolitan Trail Network' to achieve its full promise, and will better serve the needs of both residents and visitors alike. It is an attraction which has already drawn global attention.

At these times when climate concerns are so high on the national and state agendas, let alone on an international one, being able to boast of such a committed government contribution towards the creation of an invaluable, peerless environmental asset like this can only be a win, all around.

*Olga and Geoff viewing a remnant River Red Gum in the Creek below Gisborne*





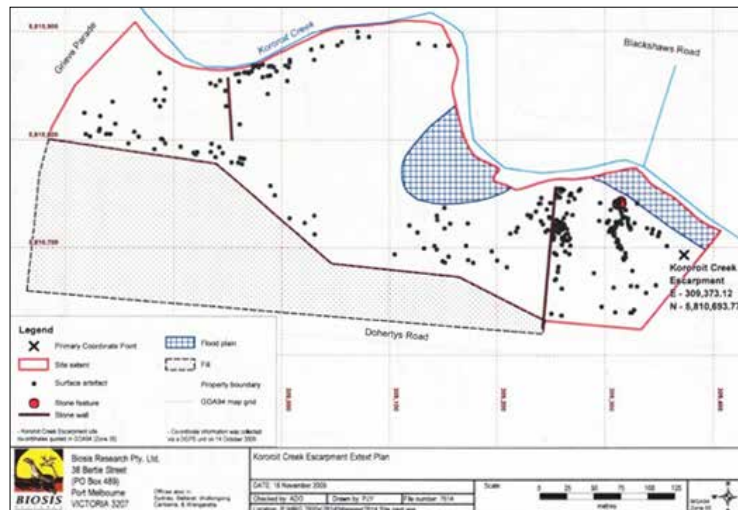
## PRESERVATION OF ABORIGINAL HERITAGE SITE

Upon my request in 2009, Crown Land designated for ‘Cemetery Purposes’ – between Dohertys Road, Grieve Parade and Kororoit Creek, Altona North, managed by the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – was investigated by archaeologists from Biosis Research, who discovered massive quantities of Aboriginal artefacts and an unusual stone formation.

Subsequently, the archaeologists had the land officially declared a site of “cultural Heritage Sensitivity”, as defined by the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007, which triggered the requirement for a mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP).

In 2015, and again in 2017, FOLKC called upon the Victorian State Government to preserve this Aboriginal Heritage Site and for a committee of management to be set up to ensure that it is properly protected and maintained, as has occurred on a similar site at Burnside, in the City of Brimbank.

FOLKC believes that this Crown Land, which may have been suitable for cemetery purposes in the late 1800s, is now certainly no longer suitable for that purpose. FOLKC has asked Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) to request the Victorian State Government consider ultimately handing back this land to the community for sensitive development as an ‘Aboriginal Heritage Park’ which FOLKC would be interested in creating, in partnership with the Traditional Owners. This request has so far gone unheeded!



*BIOSIS Kororoit Creek Escarpment Extent Plan showing the full scope of the Aboriginal Heritage Site*

## KOROROIT CREEK WATER TREATMENT PONDS

Rubbish in waterways in the Melbourne Metropolitan area remains a major problem, yet one that can be partially resolved by community education and the use of costly traps to act as catchments, before litter can enter Port Phillip Bay. At present, most of the rubbish entering Kororoit Creek from upstream sources gets trapped in the overgrown phragmites downstream of McArthurs Road, until flooding washes it en masse into Port Phillip Bay.

FOLKC has identified an opportunity to remove rubbish and purify the Creek water before it enters Port Phillip Bay through the development of a wetland between Barnes Road and the Geelong Railway line, on the east side of the Creek. All the water from the Creek could be diverted to an existing lowland in this area, where a series of three ponds could be constructed, the first to trap rubbish and the other two to aerobically treat the water before it flows under the railway to the Bay. Only during floods might Creek water bypass these ponds.

Melbourne Water would also need to fund this costly project but the ultimate result would be invaluable for the health of one of our city’s greatest water assets, Port Phillip Bay. It is a concept long overdue for resolving this persistent, unnecessarily-destructive issue. Nobody spending their leisure time in Hobson’s Bay, nor the greater Port Phillip Bay, wants to swim, paddle or boat amid torrents of filthy, potentially disease-ridden and dangerous rubbish, and our diverse local species of marine life deserve better, too.



*Wetland south east of Barnes Road, Altona North*



*The scenic side of the Kororoit Creek mouth*

## KOROROIT CREEK MOUTH

The mouth of Kororoit Creek, located at the bottom of Maddox Road, Williamstown North, could be one of the most outstanding locations in Hobsons Bay, with its expansive views across Port Phillip Bay, along with its unique bird life and the native mangrove plants, which are beginning to reappear along the restored Creek banks. However, at present, the mouth and its surroundings are a complete disgrace. This area is constantly littered with rubbish, both in and out of the water, and subsequently infested with weeds, and favoured only as a home to dumped vehicles and derelict buildings.

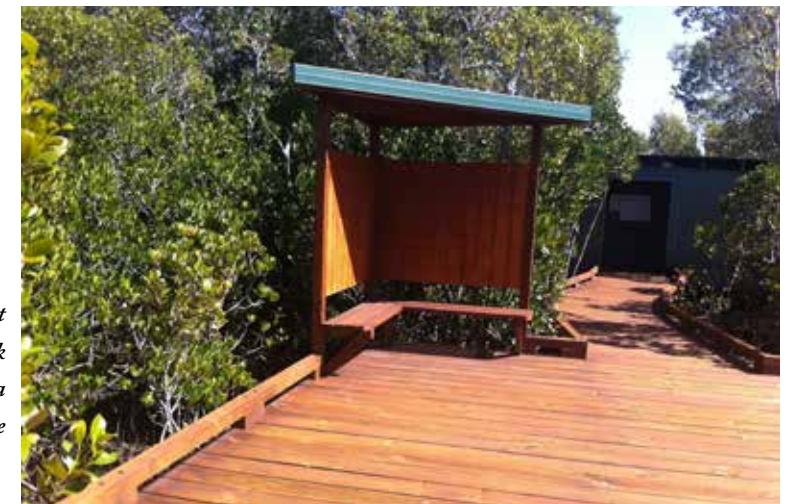
In 2007, I requested then-EPA Chairman Mick Bourke to consider permitting dredging at the mouth. However, after consideration, EPA Victoria decided that, as heavy metal contaminants had been deposited and had accumulated there due to previously polluting industrial activity upstream, it would be better to leave existing contaminants undisturbed to prevent them from entering Port Phillip Bay. Yet, these contaminants are a fact and I fail to see how simply turning a blind eye will ever solve the long-term, deep-rooted poisoning of this part of the Creek and its surrounds, or its local reputation.

FOLKC recently submitted a plan to HBCC to at least improve the aesthetics of the area by extending the existing Williamstown Wetlands plantings to encompass the mouth, and replacing one of the derelict buildings with a far more suitable large bird-hide. The mouth of Kororoit Creek might then be transformed into an important environmental feature of Port Phillip Bay.



*Plan of works for proposed bird hide*

*Proposed concept  
boardwalk  
leading to a  
large bird hide*







*Some of the graffiti  
on the historic  
bluestone bridge*

## HISTORIC BROOKLYN BLUESTONE BRIDGE

When the shared trail is ultimately built between Geelong Road and Barnes Road, it will cross the heritage-listed historic Brooklyn Bluestone Bridge, built in the 1880s. This most important and charming bridge forms the gateway to Hobsons Bay and the shared trail crossing will only add appeal for the visitors who come regularly to see our city's many notable environmental features.

At present, the bridge is being passively damaged through neglect and lack of maintenance and, due to its location being slightly 'off-the-beaten-track' – that is, adjacent to a busy freeway and not easily viewed from the nearest lanes – the valuable bluestone pitchers continue to be vandalised with unsightly graffiti.

FOLKC has requested HBCC consider installing solar lighting on both sides of the bridge so that it can be more easily seen by passing Westgate and Geelong Freeway traffic – thus improving security whilst also providing proper, illuminated exposure for this magnificent and rare local asset to all passers-by. As a resource, this lighting will be required for the intended shared path anyway, for the safety of users. In the future, FOLKC believes that HBCC and VicRoads will need to work together to improve security and ensure that this invaluable cultural asset is preserved and protected.

## BRIDGE OVER KOROROIT CREEK AT ALTONA COASTAL PARK

For some time, I have advocated for the shared trail crossing at the Kororoit Creek ford in Altona Road, Altona, to be replaced with a bridge so that a continuous path may be made available for pedestrians and cyclists, rather than the current situation which forces them to traverse the dangerous, swiftly-trafficked Kororoit Creek and Millers Roads as an alternative route, during floods.

In 1873, a substantial all-weather bridge crossing – which supplied horse-and-carriage and pedestrian traffic access to the Williamstown Racecourse – was constructed over this section of Kororoit Creek. Unfortunately for local users, this bridge was lost during floods many years ago and never replaced.



*A section of the crossing with the bridge visible (see INSET) at Williamstown Racecourse*

Construction of this bridge was mentioned in the 'Williamstown Chronicle' 8 February 1873 edition.

#### **"THE KOROROIT CREEK ROAD ...**

*For some years past a considerable difficulty has been felt for want of a footbridge or other means of crossing for foot passengers at the stepping-stones ford, over Kororoit Creek to the racecourse. This want has at length been supplied by Wyndham Shire Council in the shape of a very excellent structure. This is a foot bridge, constructed of iron and wood, for foot passengers, together with a good metal ford for carriages, so arranged that all classes of traffic can be accommodated at all seasons of the year, and at all periods of the tide. The bridge itself is 160 feet long, consisting of sixteen openings of 10 feet each, the standards or shafts, 17 in number, are of wrought iron, 1.5 inches in diameter, sunk and leaded into the solid rock to a depth of 1 foot 9 inches, so that they are perfectly firm and secure: An iron framework is then fitted and well riveted to these standards of considerable strength, all wrought iron, which carries a footway of Oregon timber 16 inches wide and 3 inches thick, fully 2 feet 3 inches above the summer level of the water. The joints of this timber planking are closely and firmly secured by balls to a bed-plate of wrought iron, which is riveted to a horizontal bar fixed at each standard. A kerb beam 9 inches by 6, red gum, is then united with the framework and standard for the whole length of the bridge, so as to give strength and solidarity to the work, and also to protect the metal on the carriage-way of the ford from being washed off by heavy floods of high tides; while foot passengers are protected by a handrail of wire rope 0.75 inch diameter, fitted from end to end through the heads of the standards, and another one fitted midway through the shafts for additional safety. Altogether the work is ingenious and clever, and admirably suits the purposes intended. It was designed and constructed by Mr Louis Le'Gould, C.E., the resident engineer of the Shire of Wyndham. The contractor was Mr. John Doherty, of Truganina."*

*Williamstown Chronicle – 8 February 1873*

To alleviate the problems still caused here by flooding, FOLKC believes the existing, largely inadequate ford crossing at Altona Road should be eliminated, and a bridge – similar but sturdier than its 19th Century cousin – be built at the original location. This bridge would be a wonderful attraction in and of itself, and yet a further asset for the local Hobsons Bay community and visitors alike.



*An aerial view of Altona Coastal Park showing the proposed crossing site & boardwalk*

The existing shared trail – near to where the bridge could be built, west of the ford at Altona Road – would then no longer be needed and could thus be eliminated. This would free the cleared site to be revegetated, allowing it to grow and eventually obscure the unsightly, existing industrial complex, increasing amenity for the community and visitors.

At the same time, FOLKC strongly believes that one feature of the final section design – that is, its proposal that an elevated boardwalk be constructed to stretch into the Altona Coastal Park, from the bridge crossing – should be formally investigated, funded and initiated by the relevant authorities, as soon as feasible. This boardwalk would have the dual benefit of allowing the public to experience the pristine park environment, without impacting on the fragile plant and animal life that clings to its home here.

It is a recommendation which can also boast a high-level of aesthetic appeal, making this section of Kororoit Creek even more attractive and valuable to our City.





# 2020 VISION

In the 1970s I was a student at Altona North High School. My parents were migrants—well educated, hardworking, and struggling to make a new life. They hadn't been aware of the stigma attached to living in the industrial west when they moved there. They had bought a new house near schools and shops and we were quite content.

I enjoyed school, most of the time. I loved sport, performed in a few school plays and kept up with my studies— but there were times when I felt the need to escape and blow off steam.

Occasionally I would wag school with a mate and we would go down to the Creek at the end of the street. There weren't many trees and the Creek was more like a drain, infested with who knows what from factories upstream. There were weeds, sharp thistles, rabbits, rubble, rubbish, and rats. We couldn't see any birds or native wildlife and, if there were yabbies, no one would have wanted to eat them anyway.

All we wanted to do was to hide in one of the small stands of trees, relax with a few smokes and have a laugh, or gripe about the teachers.

There was a quarry—explosions had shaken the houses on our street when we first moved in—and a track around the rim from trucks that had transported the excavated material across town to build the Melbourne Arts Centre. The rutted path was scattered about with stones and tall weeds and was regularly used by trail bikers who terrorised anyone who ventured down there.

At the weekend we would roam further—to the north, to the old bluestone bridge, and beyond that to where the new Westgate Freeway passed over the Creek—and also to the south, past the rail line to Geelong. After that came Cherry Lake, then the ford near the refinery close to the Creek's mouth. It was impossible to ride a

bike too far as there were no proper paths and too many hurdles in the way. Industry had taken over along the Creek bank, carelessly spewing refuse into the water and dumping old machinery and vehicles right down to the water's edge.

After I finished secondary school, we moved to a leafy suburb east of the city—and there we stayed. I studied, worked, and then had a family of my own.

Life got busy, as it often does, and I never had any inclination to return to the western suburbs. Apart from seeing the waterfront, I couldn't think of a good reason why I should.

But then, years later, I had a sudden surge of nostalgia. My family had left the nest, I was almost ready to retire, I had begun writing my family history, and I wanted to revisit some memories from the past. I started to do research on the internet and social media and was surprised by the number of 'Friends' groups, including the western suburbs, which were active in cleaning up the mess created by neglect and ignorance during urban development.

I was a regular cyclist then, mostly keeping to local tracks, but I was surprised to learn that bike paths had finally been extended and linked up across the metropolitan area, with more to come.

So I picked a fine day, with the intention to join the Kororoit Creek Trail at its intersection with the Federation Trail in West Sunshine, travel its length, and then take the train from Williamstown back to Sunshine.

I armed myself with my notes and wheeled my bike off the train at West Sunshine. I had no problem finding my way to the bike path but felt a bit disorientated at first and a bit foreign in my own childhood suburbs.

My research had told me that illegal development had taken place on Crown Land in the past but action by Government agencies had reclaimed the land for community use. It struck me that this was the spot where rusting vehicles had scarred the banks of the waterway when I was young, something that had deterred me from exploring further.

Cycling along the now continuous corridor, I marvelled at the transformation. I read my notes and saw that the illegal industrial development on the east side of the Creek, which had once ruined the view, was now an urban forest, planted by Brimbank City Council in the spot where the first Brooklyn School had opened in the 1890s.

Coming out from under the Geelong Freeway underpass, the 1880s historical Bluestone Bridge came into view. I noticed that solar lighting had been installed. I thought how wonderful it would be to visit in the evening, perhaps with a local historian who could conjure up visions of the 1850s Gold Rush when prospectors made their way across the Creek ford, before the bridge was built, on their way to the Ballarat diggings, and of swaggies who may have camped under the bridge during Depression times.

The bike path also led me up and onto the restored bridge and the view from the top was magnificent. Not only did the water sparkle in the now clean, blue water, there was also an avenue of trees lining the Geelong Freeway Boulevard. In my memory this had been a harsh, barren, dirty and unwelcoming entry to industrial Brooklyn.

The next narrow section of shared trail presented a rocky escarpment and forest, leading under the Westgate Freeway and Grieve Parade. Then came another forested area, planted by the Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek three years before.

I arrived at Hosken Reserve, the entry node to the Kororoit Creek Trails, with its carpark and signage. Various other shared trails started from here to other sections of the west and also north to Caroline Springs.

Once just a stretch of grass, there was now a large children's playground, with many delighted children running around, their parents on timber seating nearby. Closer to the water's edge, there was an almost circular gathering place, complete with tables and BBQs and toilet block. From the number of people around, it appeared to be a major location for the community. In spite of the changes this was still familiar territory.

Dotted along the path from Hosken Reserve to Barnes Road I noticed impressive artworks, a legacy of Toyota who once operated a very large facility west of the creek. There was also an off-lead area for dogs where their owners were throwing balls or twigs, or talking to fellow dog owners.

A magnificent wooded area opened up onto another playground and picnic area below Marsh Street and the Maltese Bocce Club near McArthurs Road. I recognised this area as the hiding place when we wagged school. I couldn't believe the transformation!

I thought I may as well have a look at my old street. There were still a few factories around but many of the houses, including my family home, had been demolished, replaced by two storey town houses. The school was gone too, now a modern college with spacious ground and carpark, and shared public library on the corner. How I would have loved to have had such an asset at the end of my street – a clean and welcoming Kororoit Creek.

Back on the path, I made my way to Barnes Road and remembered the old blue stone quarry, first taken over by a landfill company and now transformed into an extension of the Toyota Forest Reserve on the west side of the Creek.

The Barnes Road Bridge came into view, as well as the Louise Lavarack artwork "Threshold" which, according to my notes, had been installed as part of the construction of the bridge and shared trail crossing in 2000. I moved around the artwork, created to blend in with the forest. Like sentinels, the tall metal bands, painted in stripes to mimic the old gums of the area, sprang to life and created optical patterns that shifted and changed as I walked around.

Underneath Barnes Road and under the high-speed rail and pipeline to the Kororoit Creek Road underpass, I saw another section of forest that almost hid the transport hubs on both sides of the Creek. I read the historic marker and sign beside the heritage listed trestle bridge nearby and learned that Australia's first oil refinery was opened here in 1924. The area was also selected as a possible location for a toxic dump and treatment facility in more recent years but, fortunately, community action persuaded the Government to reconsider.

After the Kororoit Creek underpass I reached the wetland, which was an area that had always been difficult to pass through. Now I saw that there was an elevated boardwalk and a bird hide at the Wide Bend Bird Sanctuary.

After leaving the wetland, the Kororoit Creek Trail connected to the Cherry Lake Trail, leading east or west to the Cherry Lake Community Park, which I observed was another entry node to the trail network. There were more facilities in this section – playgrounds and BBQs, as well as toilets.

I exited east from Cherry Lake and followed the trail through the Melbourne Water Conservation Zone on another elevated boardwalk, under the Altona Rail, and into the Altona Coastal Park. My history notes described the spot where the Williamstown Racecourse once stood (it was actually in Altona), and where races were run from 1865 until 1940. Phar Lap raced there in 1932. The grandstand burned down in suspicious circumstances in 1947 and all that remained were the concrete foundations, and steps of a stand leading nowhere. Crossing the recently reconstructed 1880s racecourse bridge, it didn't take much imagination to visualise the days of horse and carriage, the well-dressed patrons and palm-lined paths.

The next section along the Creek took me past flourishing mangroves and fabulous birdlife, to the historic fishing village at the mouth of the Creek. After passing a bird hide, the Creek opened up with a magnificent view of Hobsons Bay. There was also a lot of birdlife, drawn back because of the rehabilitation of the Creek after many years of dedicated service by volunteers and action groups.

I was very impressed.

All that remained now was to travel east through the Williamstown Wetlands and on to the Williamstown Historic Seaport. I treated myself to lunch and coffee at one of the trendy spots on Nelson Place, eating alfresco and chatting with the locals.

The sun still shone, my nostalgic yearnings had been satisfied, so I thought I may as well return to the train station the way I came—along the shared trail.

This time I would watch out for the Swift Parrot nesting in a tree hollow. Now that would make my day.



*Anon*



# CONCLUSION

## KOROROIT CREEK

Since 2001, FOLKC has worked tirelessly to bring the community's attention to Lower Kororoit Creek's Hobsons Bay stretch, in a bold attempt to elevate its status from neglected drainage channel and eyesore waterway of low economic and environmental value, back to a restored focal point and community asset in some semblance of its original state of beauty and vitality. We believe that by involving Melbourne Water, Hobsons Bay City Council, State and Federal Governments, local industry wherever possible, and lastly – but by no means least – the community in our projects, FOLKC has transformed this long-ignored part of Kororoit Creek and achieved unprecedented results in terms of major improvements to water quality, biodiversity, habitat, functionality and bank stability, not to mention simple aesthetic appeal. We also believe we have shown some honour to the land, in a manner reflecting our respect towards its original Indigenous inhabitants.

FOLKC is convinced that, in twenty to thirty years, Kororoit Creek's health, environmental and tourism values will have improved to such a massive extent that the Creek will have become a vital part of a far larger biodiversity corridor, allowing flora and fauna free reign and easy, accommodated migration along its picturesque length.

The work still being done along Kororoit Creek, through the support of Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek Inc. members and the local Hobsons Bay community, is far from a short-term proposition; it is easily one of the most important local projects, with its own momentum and widespread support which will ultimately make Kororoit Creek one of Melbourne West's major and most significant native waterways.

## FOLKC FUTURE

In 2001, FOLKC set itself two major goals; in summary:

- to green the neglected environmental corridor along Kororoit Creek in Hobsons Bay; and
- to connect the Bay Trail from Cherry Lake, Altona, to the Metropolitan Shared Trail Network via a shared walking/bicycle path along Kororoit Creek.

By the end of 2017, FOLKC will have put in place all the necessary planning and development required to ensure that those two goals can ultimately be fully met by the combined forces of government agencies and Hobsons Bay City Council. We foresee that, by then, our organisation will no longer be required to drive these processes. We can choose either to remain as a small planting and maintenance body, more in keeping with what the Council first envisioned, or simply dissolve, knowing that we have achieved our greater purposes.

A job well done, the Creek is now blooming – a living, vital waterway right at our community's heart – as opposed to the dangerous, filth-choked, unhealthy and neglected eyesore that Lower Kororoit Creek once was, just more than decade and a half ago. FOLKC believes we leave an outstanding legacy to our local community, who we foresee will continue to use the Kororoit Creek green corridor either as a location for enjoyable, family-oriented recreation in and of itself, or to connect with the greater Melbourne 'Metropolitan Shared Trail Network' whether they are serious hikers, cyclists or simply out for a casual stroll.





# IN MEMORIAM

Sadly, several integral members of FOLKC, who each contributed greatly to the development of the Kororoit Creek corridor, have died over the past fifteen years – a great loss to the environmental community within Hobsons Bay.

Our greatest respect goes to Ray Blythman, an inaugural member who was an inspiration to us through his unfailing dedication. Ray's sudden passing left a major void in the environmental movement in Hobsons Bay and FOLKC subsequently moved to adopt the 'Ray Blythman Memorial Award' in his memory. This Life Membership Award is presented in recognition of outstanding service to the preservation of the environment and wellbeing of Kororoit Creek.



*FOLKC memorial at picnic area, below Marsh Street, Altona North*



*Memorial Stone*



Other life members of our group who have since passed away are Allan Baker, Derek Williams and Nancy McCauley, and they have each been remembered by FOLKC via inscriptions upon a memorial stone that has been placed along the Creek, at the picnic area below Marsh Street, Altona North.





## SPECIAL THANKS

I am extremely grateful to my very special 'Friends' and associates and the local community who have helped and contributed greatly to this project over the past seventeen years, in particular:

**Executive Committee:** Simon Hogan, Laurie McCauley and Debbi Woods

**Special Projects members:** Kerry Cordell, Len Towerzey, Fay Hogan, Linda Hogan, Steven Hogan, Ken Daley, Richard Leppitt, Malcolm Hansford, Brian Steadman and Andrew Calvert

**Long-serving Committee Members:** Carol Baker, Margaret Baker, Leigh Hardinge, Merridee Hardinge, Peter Forward, Heather Forward, Jenny Picci, Jennifer Williams, Allan Williams and George Said

Toyota Australia  
McGauran Family  
Melbourne Water  
Hobsons Bay Council  
City West Water

Department of Environment, Land Water & Planning  
Environment Protection Authority Victoria  
VicRoads  
Brimbank Council  
Wyndham Council

Very special thanks to my wife Olga and our family, Julie, Liza, Dean and Kristen, whose individual and collective support has been the main driver for this project.

Geoffrey W Mitchelmore OAM  
27 August 2017

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: FOLKC PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS

#### Community Partnerships

Habitat Trust, Patron	Toyota Australia
Altona Scouts	Mobil Altona Refinery
Baha'i Community	Altona North Landfill
Greek Community	Cedar Meats
Landcare Australia	City Circle Demolition
Lions Clubs, Hobsons Bay	Cleanaway
Planet Ark - National Tree Day	CRT Group
Primary & Secondary schools in Hobsons Bay	Delta Group
Ramblers 4WD-Club	Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust
Rotary Clubs, Hobsons Bay	Nestle
State Emergency Service, Altona	Toll Group
Sudanese Community	Veolia

#### Government Partnerships

Hobsons Bay City Council  
Melbourne Water  
Brimbank City Council  
City West Water  
Conservation Volunteers Australia  
EPA Victoria  
Federal Government Departments  
Parks Victoria  
State Government Departments  
VicRoads  
Wyndham City Council

#### Business Partnerships

Millers Inn  
Altona Engineering  
AMCOR  
Bakers Delight  
Bunnings  
Burns Site Development  
Cedar Meats  
Don Smallgoods  
Keima Press  
Link Pumps  
Powercor

#### Industry Partnerships

Toyota Australia – FOLKC Major Sponsor 2004 (Ongoing)  
Millers Inn – Community Support Program 2001 (Ongoing)  
AMCOR – Corridors of Green 2001  
Hobsons Bay Council – Community Grant Program 2001 (Ongoing)  
CRT Group – Community Support Program 2001 - 2010  
Melbourne Water – Corridors of Green Projects 2002 - 2004  
Melbourne Water – Community Grant Projects 2002 (Ongoing)  
Powercor – Community Grant Program 2002  
Greening Australia – Community Support Program 2002  
Parks Victoria – Community Grants Program 2003  
Toyota Australia – National Tree Day Program 2004 (Ongoing)  
Mobil Altona Refinery – Community Grants Program 2004 (Ongoing)  
Burns Site Development – Community Support 2005 - 2010  
Toll Group – Community Grant Program 2008  
Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – Community Support 2014

## Appendix 2: REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND LOCAL PLANS

FOLKC Lower Kororoit Creek Concept Plan (2001)  
[www.folkc.com.au](http://www.folkc.com.au)

Melbourne Parks & Waterways Kororoit Creek Waterway Plan (1995)  
[www.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.melbournewater.com.au)

Melbourne Water Kororoit Creek Waterway Management Activity Plan (2004)  
[www.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.melbournewater.com.au)

Port Phillip & Westernport Regional Catchment Strategy (2004 - 2009)  
[www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au](http://www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au)

Port Phillip & Westernport Regional River Health Strategy  
[www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au](http://www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au);

Melbourne Water Regional River Health Strategy  
[www.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.melbournewater.com.au)

Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy (2005 - 2030)  
[www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

State Government Victorian Local Sustainability Accord Fund  
[www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

Parks Victoria Linking People + Spaces Strategy (2002)  
[www.parksvic.vic.gov.au](http://www.parksvic.vic.gov.au)

Swift Parrot Recovery Program  
<http://wwf.org.au/tsn>

Hobsons Bay Kororoit Creek Landscape Master Plan (2005)  
[www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au);

Hobsons Bay Environment Plan (2001 - 2005)  
[www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au)

Hobsons Bay Environment Plan (2006 - 2010)  
[www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au)

Hobsons Bay Storm Management Plan (2006)  
[www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au)

Hobsons Bay Hosken Reserve Draft Master Plan  
[www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au)

Hobsons Bay Biodiversity Strategy (2015)  
[www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au)

## Appendix 3: FOLKC COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

State Government: Barnes Road Bridge Steering Group

State Government: Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy

Mobil Australia: Community Liaison Committee

Toyota Australia: Community Liaison Committee

Monsanto: Community Liaison Committee

State Government: Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy Steering Group

State Government: Vision for Werribee Plains Grant Selection Panel

Hobsons Bay Landscape Advisory Committee

Hobsons Bay Integrated Transport Strategy

Hobsons Bay Strategic Bicycle Plan

Melbourne Water: Federation Trail Development Group

Werribee Catchment Management Committee

Western Melbourne Catchment Network

EPA Victoria: Compliance & Enforcement Advisory Panel

Hobsons Bay Flood Mitigation Strategy

Hobsons Bay Rabbit Plan

City West Water: Greening the West

Brooklyn Community Reference Group

Brooklyn Residents Action Group

Federal Government: 1 Million Trees for the West Project

Hobsons Bay Western Transport Study

Hobsons Bay Biodiversity Strategy

Hobsons Bay Strategic Advisory Group

Transurban Western Distributor Link



## Appendix 4: FOLKC AWARDS

### 2006 Regional Landcare Awards

Port Philip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority:  
'Caring for Waterways Award'

### 2007 Third Annual Sustainable Cities Awards

Keep Australia Beautiful Council:  
'Biodiversity & Conservation Award'

### 2007/08 Victorian Landcare Award

'Rivercare Award'

### 2008/09 Australian Landcare Awards

'Rivercare Nominee'



### 2008 Banksia Environment Award

'Community Award'

### 2010 Sustainable Cities Award

Keep Australia Beautiful Council:  
'Finalist'

### 2011 Sustainable Cities Award

Keep Australia Beautiful Council:  
'Finalist'

### 2017 Melbourne Water Award

River Health Incentives Program:  
'Community Award'



*Presentation by State  
Governor Professor  
David de Kretser AC*

## Appendix 5: FOLKC MEMBERSHIP

### Life Members

Carol Baker	Paul Koch
Margaret Baker	Laurie McCauley
Allan Baker (dec)	Nancy McCauley (dec)
Laurie Bell	Dean Mitchelmore
Ray Blythman (dec)	Geoff Mitchelmore
Bert Boere	Kristen Mitchelmore
Veronica Boere	Olga Mitchelmore
Ghorghe Boere	Jennifer Picci
Andrew Calvert	Tony Pouter
Kerry Cordell	Craig Rayner
Ken Daley	Kirsty Rayner
Andre Dreyfus	George Said
Betsy Dunne	Maroula Said
Malcolm Hansford	Helen Smale
Leigh Hardinge	Brian Steadman
Merridee Hardinge	Len Towerzey
Fay Hogan	Derek Williams (dec)
Linda Hogan	Jenny Williams
Simon Hogan	Allan Williams
Steven Hogan	Debbi Woods

### Inaugural Members

Ray Blythman	Olga Mitchelmore
Elio Comello	Susanna Moore
Peter George	Keith Moth
Chris Loorham	Craig Rayner
Garry Mather	Kirsty Rayner
Glen Matheson	Mick Rourke
Dean Mitchelmore	Pathirana Senarath
Geoff Mitchelmore	Derek Williams
Kristen Mitchelmore	Craig Woods
Liza Mitchelmore	Debbie Woods

## Appendix 6: LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMP	Altona Memorial Park
ANL	Altona North Landfill
BCC	Brimbank City Council
BCRG	Brooklyn Community Reference Group
BRAG	Brooklyn Residents Action Group
CLC	Community Liaison Committee
CWW	City West Water
DoI	Department of Industry
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
DELWP	Department of Environment, Water, Land & Planning
EPA	Environment Protection Authority Victoria
ESO	Environmental Significance Overlay
FOLKC	Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek
FKC	Friends of Kororoit Creek
GMCT	Great Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust
GtW	Greening the West
HBCC	Hobsons Bay City Council
HBKCM	Hobsons Bay Kororoit Creek Masterplan
KCRS	Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy
NTD	National Tree Day
PPWP CMA	Port Phillip & Western Port Catchment Management Authority
PPRZ	Public Park & Recreation Zone
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
TMCA	Toyota Motor Corporation Victoria
VCAT	Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal
V4WP	Vision for Werribee Plains
WCC	Wyndham City Council
1MT	One Million Trees program





Geoff Mitchelmore was born in Yallourn in 1940 and, shortly after his marriage to Olga, moved to the City of Altona where they have lived for the past 50 years.

Bringing his love of amateur theatre from country Victoria to the city, Geoff became involved in Altona Drama Group, which became Altona City Theatre. He also became interested in community affairs and was jokingly known as the seventh unofficial councillor due to his presence in the Council Chamber at nearly all Council meetings over many years. He hoped that he could inspire the council to help him achieve some of his goals to develop amateur theatre and the arts in Altona.

Through his work as Inaugural President, Altona Arts Advisory Committee, over eight years, he inspired Altona Council to build the Altona Civic Theatre Complex, and was honoured with the keys to the theatre, at its opening on 25 November 1988, by Altona City Mayor, Cr Daniel Duane. Geoff was awarded the Australia Day Citizen Award by the Mayor, Cr WLJ Crofts, on 26 January 1993 in recognition of his outstanding service to the Altona Community.

In about 2000, traffic and environmental issues in the then City of Hobsons Bay moved Geoff to take an active role to resolve health and safety concerns in the community. In particular, truck traffic issues in Altona North led to his demand to the State Government for action to alleviate the problem, resulting in the building of the \$4.5 million Barnes Road Bridge over the Kororoit Creek. Unfortunately, his dream to eliminate truck traffic from the Altona North residential area, as envisaged by the Barnes Road Consultative Committee, was never brought to fruition.

During the planning of the bridge project, Geoff recognised that the Kororoit Creek was in very poor condition and needed much work to return it to its pre-settlement condition. In 2001, with this in mind, and with the aim of developing the creek as an environmental corridor of green, Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek Inc. was born.

Over his years in Altona North, Geoff has received a number of awards for his service to the community including:

- the Centenary Medal by the Governor General of Australia, Peter Hollingworth, in 2000, for his contribution to the success of Australia's first hundred years of Federation;
- the Order of Australia Medal by the Governor General, Michael Jefferies, on 26 January 2007, for service to the community of Hobsons Bay, especially through the establishment of Environmental and Performing Arts projects; and
- the Hobsons Bay Citizen of the Year on 26 January 2015 for outstanding commitment to the arts and natural environment and dedicated advocacy for the Hobsons Bay community.

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