KOOYONGKOOT ALLIANCE

KooyongKoot Keepers Report

I think I say this every year, but it's been another huge year for the KooyongKoot Alliance (KKA).

I would firstly acknowledge our financial supporters, State Government through DEECA, Boroondara Council and Melbourne Water, their funding allows me to devote my time to the creek and the groups that care for it. Other corporate supporters include Simpson Construction ,PLC, Earthwize, Australia Post, Custom Fleet, Laing O Rourke, Miele, Bunnings, Camberwell Grammar, as well as many generous donations from other businesses and private individuals.

And our doers, those in the main committee, numerous sub committees and those that help behind the scenes at our plantings, as well as those that plant and weed… what a community we have!! Rex will have more to say on these groups in his report.

A key part of the Keeper role is being your voice on The Gardiners Creek Regional Collaboration (comprising 14 different stakeholders). Our Strategic Plan was released in July and can be regarded as an important stepping stone. It is not the end of our journey, just a new beginning packed with opportunity. KKA continue to be an integral part of the various working groups shaping and developing that strategy for the catchment. I would acknowledge the great work of all the collaboration members, it's such a positive group, but would specifically mention Neil Sutton, the Collaboration Lead. Thanks also to KKA Committee members Rex, Su and Frank for their contributions.

Advocacy continues to be an important part of the Catchment Keeper role and our member groups help us reach those in the top tiers of government. This combined with our membership of the Urban Waterways Alliance, which is made up of 6 urban waterways with representatives from the Yarra , Werribee , Merri , Darebin and Maribyrnong waterways supports our collective advocacy. Our influence continues to grow. The Confluence event at Fed Square as part of Riverfest is shining example of that.

We also continue to be key stakeholder on the Concerned Waterways Alliance, who do amazing advocacy work for waterways on a regional level.

I have prepared written representations on several issues across the catchment, often with others, and feel our voice is both respected and heard. Several submissions on issues potentially impacting the catchment including, council biodiversity and canopy targets, inappropriate development, even cat containment. We are also on the Suburban Rail Loop Precinct reference group at Burwood station and prepared submissions on the Suburban Rail Loop as well as appearances at Planning Panels.

One of the most heartening outcomes is the involvement of the community echoing our views and indeed leading the advocacy charge in many instances.

I would also like to thank the Eastsider Newspaper for its support for the KKA and Glenys Grant for her penmanship and encouragement and indeed to all contributers!

Projects

Revegetation Projects/Grants

It has been another big year for projects. Last year successfully implemented a number of grants, resulting in KKA planting nearly 30,000 plants and a total of 80,000 in the catchment by all our members, producing over 21,000 volunteer hours! A 21% increase on last year. An astounding achievement! And this year we have an extremely impressive set of results to be revealed on the night.

A $10,000 Melbourne Water **Healthy Waterways** grant at Markham Reserve on Gardiners Creek, involving over 20 different community groups planting over 7000 trees and shrubs. Thanks also to Boroondara Council for their support on this project.

We completed the Gardiners Creek Reserve Biodiversity project thanks to the State Governments **Greenlink Grant** ($94,000), 26000 plants over 1.2 Ha over 3 years and the work continues, with the Urban Guerrillas, FO Gardiners Creek Reserve, PLC, and Deakin University as our project stakeholders. Thanks also to Whitehorse Council for their support on this project.

Over 5000 plants have been planted at **Back Creek Reserve Glen Iris** as part of our Clean Waterways Community grant from Balwyn Rotary and Boroondara and together with BASSCARE.

We have also continued our **revegetating nature strips program** with a grant from Bendigo Bank, with 10 nature strips being completed. Thanks to Clare Walker and her team for their amazing input. Clare has now stepped down from the role, but we thank her for her wonderful contribution and lasting legacy.

The Clean Waterways expo' at Glen Iris on Saturday 29th November, was amazing in the calibre of speakers and politicians and supporters that attended the event, despite the weather!!! It was a wonderful day with so many positives arising , thank you to Rotary Balwyn and Boroondara Council for their support and to all the community groups and KKA team that supported it.

Our members

We now have over 20 groups within the Alliance, and more are on the way.

The Urban Guerrillas contine to shine and inspire,their youthful positive presence. We welcomed a new group to the Alliance, Friend of Camberwell Junction. Recently formed groups continue to grow, Below the Lake,FO Back Creek- Ferndale and FO Markham Forest FO Wurundjeri Way.Maturing groups such as ACBC, Back to Nettleton,thrive, as do established groups at Blackburn Lake and at the Creeklands, Urban Forest,Damper Creek , Ashburton Forest,Valley Reserve and South Surrey Park are the backbone of the Alliance, but all the groups play an important part in our community.

This is an exciting time for the individual groups, The Alliance and for the Creek.

Up and coming projects in the catchment

The Gardiners Creek Reserve Biodiversity Project A further $45,000 grant has been received from the Suburban Rail Loop to plant over 7000 plants over a new 0.5 Ha site across the creek from our current DEECA site.

A $25,000 **Landcare/BUPA grant** will allow us to revegetate the Ashburton Creek biodiversity corridor in Glen Iris.

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Rewilding Stonnington's Regenerate! project is now under way 2025-28. With a grant of $250,000 from the Australian Government's Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, it involves significant revegetation work by volunteers on 4 sites managed by City of Stonnington and Melbourne Water along two biodiversity corridors. Community partners include KKA, The Yarra Link Project and GreenLink Alliance. In consultation with Traditional Custodians.

Funding for the Keeper role is a moving feast with a renewed focus on project management with, Boroondara providing $14,000 triennial funding and DEECA $54,000 to deliver 7 projects in the catchment over 2 years. Corporate planting is an increasingly important part the Keepers funding and it continues to grow!

New collaborations

We are also developing new exciting collaborations with Box Hill Golf course, Riversdale Golf Course, Bendigo Bank, Solway Primary, Auburn High, as well as Ashwood High. Education is increasingly becoming something we are being asked about and will present opportunities going forward both through schools and councils.

I would like to thank everyone for their support over the past year and in particular the current committee for the great support and guidance that they have provided, they are a formidable team.

President Rex Dusting**, Vice President** Fank Giorlando, **Secretary** Francesca Kilvenny, **Treasurer** Gillian Jervis, *Committee members,* Su Dempsey, Sam Russell.

I would like to say a huge thanks to Gillian our Treasurer for stepping back into the breach as our Treasurer, a critical role for the KKA. Thanks also to Francesca and her stellar work as our new Secretary.

As for the future … having such a strong committee and the formation and growth of our sub committees including a very dynamic stalls group points to a strong future for the KKA, a future where we can and will make real positive change happen.

Thank you all for your continued support.



27 October 2026