



Yalukit Willam Nature Association
Annual Report
2022/23



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Introduction

The Boonwurrung name for the First Nation Peoples of this area is the Yaluk-ut Weelam - which can be translated as People of the River or waterways. Waterways defined the boundaries of most of Melbourne's clans. Boonwurrung lands were mainly those with streams that flowed to the sea. The Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve is a much-needed restoration project for a small but significant part of the Elster Creek catchment. The work that YWNA, Bayside Council and other stakeholders are putting into restoring the health of waterways and wetland habitat will give much needed restorative care to a now very compromised urban creek and wetland area. It is a terrific privilege for for this community association to be ongoingly integral in connecting the broader community to this important project and active in supporting the realisation of the [Masterplan](#).



Homage to: Geoff Love: our friend and comrade with an enduring drive, strong beliefs and founding member of – Yalukit Willam Nature Association.

Geoff said a few days before he passed in May - **‘No person achieves change on their own. It always happens as a collective group’** and he saw himself as one of many like-minded and engaged local community voices for change.

Geoff was active for decades, well known in Elwood for “fighting the good fight” years before being a founding member in 2016 of Elsternwick Park Coalition, now YMNA. He knew healthy river and sea waters are a lifeblood of our environment.

Geoff banded together after the 2011 floods to form the **Elwood Floods Action Group (EFLAG)** to demonstrate lack of preparedness by governments and service led to major flooding. In the ear of Councillors, he sat on the BCC Deliberative Panel on Elsternwick Park 2018, determined to see change happen!

A big win happened after standing up at heaps of Council meetings they updated local planning laws in flood zones and building standards above flood waters.

Another big win was the **Elster Creek Catchment Project in 2018** the partnership of 4 councils and Melbourne Water, launched after residents put a case for water management. He sat on the community panel.

More recently he was a huge part of YWNA committee life, the creation of the Reserve. Active right up to his last days. He always emphasised the importance of maintaining our independence from Council, even as we worked in close partnership. He loved working with the team, we miss his sound advice, support and having fun on Waterwatch days.

Geoff’s strong beliefs and vision of a vibrant, healthy, active place for all people to be close to nature, as he enjoyed, will be realised. He exuded activism, politics with humour, showing up in dashing hats ready for action.

Our warm affection and respect for Geoff comes from his energy, giving of himself, belief in grassroots action, which for him was grounded in a sense of place, family history and personal conviction many of us admired.

We miss our “passionate old hippy, with a wry grin and braveness, sticking to your conviction in his last days to “go gently”, choosing his own time (thanks tho the new laws) -he is now at rest and peaceful, watching over us as we work away.

RIP Long live his legacy!

Geoff with YWNA crew, Josh Burns (Member for McNamara) and daughter.



Caring for Country

YWNA respectfully acknowledges that we are working and living on the unceded lands of the Boonwurrung people. The YWNR community has been fortunate to have N'arwee't Dr Carolyn Briggs's direct involvement and wisdom. This is both in the development of the reserve itself and with this organisation. N'arwee't Carolyn will fondly recall first walking over the then golf course with Neil from the Ecocentre, being closely followed by some visiting water birds.

Carolyn Briggs OM is a Boon Wurrung senior Elder and is the chairperson and founder of the Boon Wurrung Foundation and on the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council. A descendant of the First Peoples of Melbourne, the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung. She is the great-granddaughter of Louisa Briggs, a Boon Wurrung woman born near Melbourne in the 1830's. Carolyn has been involved in developing and supporting opportunities for Indigenous youth and Boon Wurrung culture for over 40 years. YWNA has worked with N'arwee't, the Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council and Bayside Council during the design and building phase of the meeting place in the Chain of Ponds. The entire Elwood Swamp of which this reserve seeks to in part regenerate, was a rich and sustaining place for the Yaluk-ut Weelam for many thousands of years. The restorative aspect involves returning plants that were common in pre-colonial days to thrive here and restore some health to this regenerated wetland. The plants and wetland scape will in turn offer refuge for many living creatures. The meeting/knowledge (Yulendji Djeembana) place in the Chain of Ponds will be home to cultural events and education and a place for reflection and connection to place. The Mudstone, a sedimentary rock used in the reserve as stepping stones, comes from nearby Boonwurrung Country.



The renaming in August 2022 to the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve reflects this ongoing engagement and reimagining of place with the rightful ancient and ongoing connections to Country acknowledged. Australia's oldest flowers are 126-120 million years old. Some of the plants being reintroduced have been around for millions of years. Until we removed them. Now is the time for action. Now is the time to care for local waterways, reserves and learn to listen to the lessons of this ancient Country and Culture and the living words of Elders and custodians. N'arwee't had an informal role as a Principal Cultural Advisor and the committee has moved to formalise that role as Patron to the YWNA Association. The spelling of the Clan name has been standardised and our Association is using the same spelling used for the Reserve name by Bayside Council.

HIGHLIGHTS

This year has been a productive, incredibly active and formative year for the Yalukit Willam Nature Association. Key moments have included:

- The relatively recent loss of epa/YWNA founding member Geoffrey Love. The YWNA committee is terribly saddened to lose our longstanding Committee member and Waterways champion.
- It is in this reporting period that founding member and Treasurer Vincent Mumford passed away- he is always missed. Banksia seeds were collected by Jo Samuel King and with Annie Mumford, Vincent's widow, the Plant Lab crew propagated trees that are part of wooded area in the Wildflower meadow.
- Consolidating a partnership agreement with Bayside Council : this has taken the form of monthly meetings with Council Officers Paul Gibbs and Tom Vercoe (with additional support from Jill Colson) and the new Project Lead Jarrod Fleming- this will be an ongoing role of YWNA President and Vice President to meet monthly with Council Officers. The time spent in these negotiations has been estimated by our VP Alison Soutar as involving - Doc prep- 200 hours. Strategic planning 200 hours. Meetings, phone calls, prep, debriefs 300 hours= 700 hours total. The President time would be slightly less as Alison did the bulk of getting our paper work right.
- Rosie Grech - our Communications committee member Completed her internship with YWNA- partnering with RMIT Uni and helping her complete her International Relations degree course work.
- Professor N'arwee't Carolyn Briggs OM, after another year as an informal Cultural advisor , has accepted a role as YWNA Patron and Principal Cultural Advisor for YWNA.
- A grant from the Palais Foundation to enable us to record an oral project documenting the founding people involved in the YWNR and important stories connected to the place. Our first interviews with Geoffrey Love were completed just before he passed.
- Plant Lab further established and SPA (Seed Production Area) first season collected, counted and germinated.- Management of plant nursery. Coordination and induction of new volunteers to continue working with more people on site.
- Establishment of the YWNA shed garden (2022/23) The shed gardens aimed at showcasing forms, colours, function and habitat value of our Indigenous flora thus promoting use in home gardens to increase local habitat
- Many working bee hours dedicated to infill work in the Chain of Ponds.
- Nets finally removed from the Chain of Ponds
- YWNA has completed the Volunteer and Supervisor Induction materials for our team leaders with Ecocentre staff and supported by Bayside Council. This will be formalised with Supervisor inductions in coming weeks. Supervisor Inductions were developed with in-kind support from Ecocentre- and we especially thank Nadav Zisin for his tireless work with us.
- Monthly Working Bees- sometime twice a month when more work needed. Over 1,080 volunteer hours .

- Twice weekly Plant Lab/Shed volunteer workshops (2 hourly)- establishment and maintenance of the SPA (Seed Production area)- seed collection completed for the wildflower meadow. Coordination with researchers to ensure the YWNA and volunteers understand seed propagation methodologies.
- YWNA/ Love Our Streets- (coordinators Glen and Rowena) - Monthly meetings - report to follow.
- YWNA Waterwatch- monthly Waterwatch - YWNA awarded an Outstanding Service at a ceremony held in Bendigo in March 23.
- YWNA facilitated and hosted a visit from the Environment Minister Tania Plibersek and other local dignitaries.
- Monthly bird surveys (when possible)- all surveys published on the website. We will have a new coordinator at the end of the year as Bob and Alyson are stepping down due to moving out of the area.
- Meetings with the YWNR committee of management with Bayside Council - two YWNA committee members on board- Alison Soutar and Tricia Wevill (2022-23)- report*
- Membership of 172 paid up members and over 2200 Facebook group members.
- Ongoing support of [Nature Ambassador program](#) with key youth leader Sienna Cross, her family and Elwood Primary School
- Many many walks, events and tours over the Reserve with Elwood Primary School and Nature Ambassadors, St Stephens Gardening Group, Melbourne Water Education Team, BRASCA (Bayside Refugee Action Group), schools, local council, State and Federal politicians. Thank
- Over \$15 million promised from Federal Labor to the reserve.
- YWNA volunteer articles published in [Spring Banksia](#) (Natalie Davey- Storykeepers and Waterkeepers) [Summer Banksia](#) (Sue Forster - Bird Surveying in YWNR) [Winter Banksia](#) (Natalie Davey -Magpie Goose story),
- Newsletters published onto our website. [Spring- Bareep](#), and [Old Man Sun](#)
- Report from Wildlife team on the nets. Dassi Herszberg is our YWNA wildlife advisor. The Stuck Duck report was presented to Council Officers by Natalie and Alison. We are hoping any future netting plans will look to advice from this group before installing
- YWNA committee members Geoff and Gina ongoing work on Flood Committee- following up Melbourne Water's plans for the Diversion Drain
- Meeting up with like-minded groups to learn more about their organisations and ideas. Bendigo Catchment Management, Ecocentre and learning from YWNA volunteers.
- N'arwee't Carolyn Briggs joins the committee moving from her informal role to a formal place as Principal Cultural Advisor to YWNA as Patron.
- 6 Committee meetings, 2 Strategy meetings and 3 Sub committee meetings , countless informal meetings.
- YWNA made a submission to the parliamentary Native Duck Shooting Enquiry- Thanks Ally Soutar

- YWNA commissioned a A guide to the ecological restoration of the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve from YWNA Naturalist Gio Fitzpatrick - this is along the principles of....” It should be concerned with building as resilient an ecosystem as possible, comprised of as great a proportion of locally indigenous organisms as possible, while improving the population status of identified target fauna species. To realise the site’s unique ecological potential, designers and managers must take advantage of key assets/opportunities while mitigating key challenges for biodiversity.”

A tremendous thank you to our fantastic, irrepressible and hardworking YWNA committee and sub-committees and the many, many incredible volunteers and community who have supported YWNA activities and the YWNR vision over the year. A grateful thank you to Bayside Councillors and Bayside Council officers, key contractors and Council YWNR Project lead Jarrod Fleming.





Jo Samuel-King, Jen Walsh and Annie Mumford

Treasured memories of the previous YWNA Treasurer, Vincent Mumford. Preparing Banksia seeds with Annie M for the Wooded area planned next to the Wildflower Meadow.



Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve Masterplan: History and Progress

The Elsternwick Park Association, through its membership of the EPNR Community Reference Panel, worked with Bayside Council officers and experts to develop the [EPNR Masterplan](#).

This masterplan was based on:

- Elsternwick Park Association vision for the reserve (1)
- The Principle and Priorities document developed by the epa (2)
- Technical reports-these included a fauna strategy, as well as other very technical flood management and hydrology reports.
- A series of workshops attended by epa panel members as well as experts, Bayside officers and other stakeholders.

It is incredibly exciting to see the Chain of Ponds now finished and sense how it will become an integral part of the Nature Reserve. Most of the nets were removed by April of this year. The plantings are becoming established and seem to be coping with the ravages of eager swamp hens and others. The Chain of Ponds will be the haven for the birds and animals when the next stage of the Masterplan wetland development begins. Melbourne Water have now released their rough draft for the [Diversion Drain](#). Bayside Council and YWNA are awaiting their final deliberation of the amounts of water to be released through the reserve so that the final planning for the Southern Wetlands can be completed.

The next stage will be the completion of the Meeting Place (Djeembana Yulendji), the establishment of the Wildflower/grassy meadow, frog hollows and woodland. Infrastructure to be completed along the New St edge to include amenities for community use.

YWNR Committee of Management

The Masterplan as directed by the initial Reference committee established the concept of the of a **Committee of Management**, and this body held its welcome meeting on the 2nd November 2022 and has since held 4 subsequent meetings in this year (Nov, Feb, April, June). Alison Soutar was selected as the YWNA representative and Tricia Wevill YWNA committee member (Plant ecology) was also selected as one of two expert representatives. Meetings take place 6 times at year at the Bayside Brighton offices. The committee of management is still taking shape and finding direction with the upcoming year focusing on the development of a management plan for the YWNR and the fine tuning of a terms of reference suitable for the committee to operate under. The COM will hopefully play a role in bringing oversight of the project and insuring all the Masterplan goals are met. It is a good forum for bringing in expertise and sharing best practice for this important project. Environmental experts Dr Tricia Wevill and Patrick Honan and Alison Soutar (YWNA) will join the committee along with residents Stephen le Page, Sam Murray, Stephanie Convery and Alicia Darvall.

The carefully considered appointments by Bayside Council were made following an expression of interest process calling out to residents, community representatives and technical experts that could represent a range of views and interests with experience that is relevant to the goals outlined in the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve Masterplan.



YWNA activities 22-23

YWNA Plant Lab

The Plant Lab is the YWNA's very own plant propagation facility and at the heart of most of our activities. 100% volunteer run, the Plant Lab plans to supply the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve with tens of thousands of plants per year. The Plant Lab endeavours to grow the rare, difficult or inconspicuous plant species, which are often forgotten in nurseries and revegetation projects. These will make all the difference in our aim to restore biodiversity and create suitable habitat for target species.. Ongoing propagation will remain essential in maintaining populations even after the initial establishment of the reserve's plantings. It will give the plants the help they need to overcome impediments to natural regeneration such as weeds, climate change, missing pollinators, lack of fire etc.

- We have had a steady and increasing number of volunteers
- Maintained frequent sessions, with support from Julie Beatty and Sanja Blackburn taking on supervisory roles to help run the sessions and Gio assisting when able to – much thanks to all the key YWNA Plant Lab volunteers who have all contributed so much.
- Continued to offer both weekday and weekend sessions aimed at meeting various peoples availabilities
- Offered a broad range of activities to suit most interests and abilities, ranging from heavy physical tasks such as digging to seated table top activities such as plant division, label writing, etc.
- The shed gardens were designed, planted and are now looking well established. The shed garden aimed at both showing the incredible range of indigenous plants but also variety of ways in which they can be incorporated into designs. For example - diachondra as lawn alternative, intertwined climbers to provide extra splash of colour at different times of year, swathes of weeping grasses and grouped planting for mass effect and seen some individual

standouts such as the *Epacris impressa* (local heathland species) and of course the



Brachyscome diverifolia.

- We have continued to learn about new species and how to propagate them eg: *Carex gunniana*
- Finally had some success with some of the more challenging plant species such as *Gahnia sieberiana* through various treatments and leaving in a constant pool of water over many months
- And of course, like any nursery, plenty of maintenance tasks that whilst they do not always get the kudos, are essential for the well being of everything we grow (minimising exposure to weed seed in particular).
- Our thank you event for volunteers with a cultural and nursery tour to Willum warrain; Volunteer Sandy Morrison reported on the event. Attached.

The Plant Lab now has 27 volunteers who alternate between shed and Plant work bi-weekly. Nearly all the plants that have been propagated on site have been planted out by volunteers into the Chain of Ponds. Volunteers have contributed 1400 hours in the Plant Lab over this year.

Overall , its been such a pleasure to work together with all of the Plant Lab team regularly and to have witnessed all that we have achieved this year

Claire Hudson Plant Lab coordinator



View to the YWNA shed from the Shed Gardens

SPA (Seed Production Area)

The seed production area produced a stellar first harvest of seed that will go towards our collective planting for the Wild flower/ grassy meadow. Melbourne Uni has tested our collected seeds and our volunteers managed a near 100% rate of initial trials of seed germination. This is a brilliant outcome from a group that is really just beginning! Extra plant maintenance and harvest done by the SPA crew – who have been very responsive to our changing needs throughout the growing and harvesting seasons



Julie Beatty hard at work with final seed collection.

YWNR Seed Production Area Harvest Season Year End June 2023 Report

By Julie Beatty. SPA lead.

YWNR's seed production area (SPA) of 24 indigenous plant species and local provenance was designed and set up by University of Melbourne's Urban Horticulture and Resources faculty and graduate students in partnership with Bayside Council and YWNA in March 2022. -The SPA coordinated with Melbourne Uni researches to provide opportunities to our plant lab/SPA team on how to optimise plant productivity and seed collection. YWNA recruited and managed around 15 volunteers as steward and carer for the SPA. The range of SPA activities included planting up new boxes of plants, weeding, seed collection, seed cleaning, checking the irrigation system, ordering soil, sand and other materials. Some SPA activities were also included in our Working Bees.

The inaugural harvest season delivered a very good result based on University of Melbourne's inspection and analysis of the harvest including the amount of plants grown, the amount of seed collected and cleaned, and the germination levels in the seed stock. Feedback to YWNA from University of Melbourne lauded the collective effort of our volunteers and confirmed that the amount of cleaned seed stock was what they expected and that the germination levels across the species were excellent, reflecting the quality of work performed by seed collectors throughout the harvest. Well done to all the volunteers involved!

YWNR SPA Harvest Metrics



Julie working with Dr Tricia Wevill from YWNA Committee

	Seed Collected and Cleaned	No Seed Collected or Cleaned
Plant Species	21	3
No. of Boxes Planted	295	43
Average Plants per Box	8	7.9
No. of Plants	2304	386
Clean Seed Stock Weight (kg)	2.44	N/A
Germination Levels (%)	100	N/A
Volunteer Hours Seed Cleaning	320	N/A

Volunteer Hours Total SPA		
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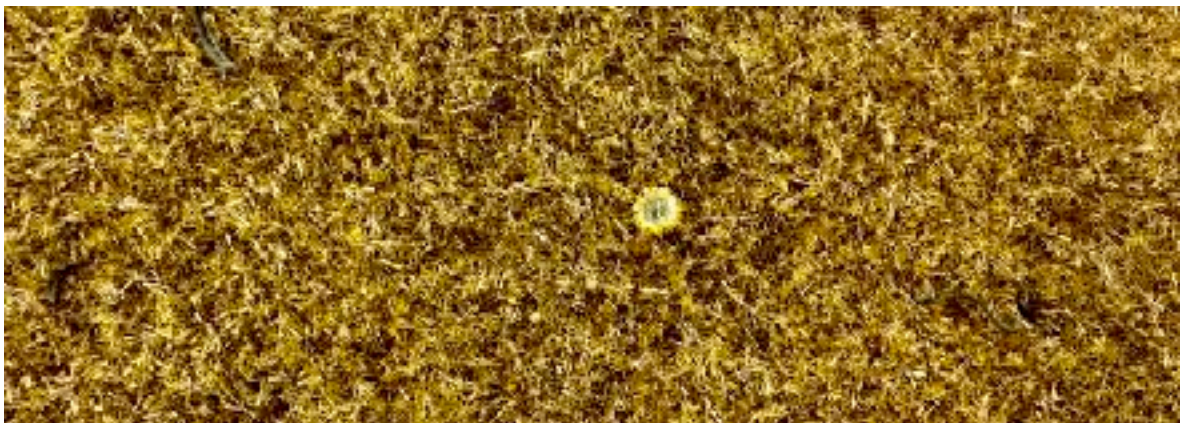
Seed Production Area (SPA) Species

Species Name	Common Name
Arthropodium milleflorum	Vanilla Lily
Arthropodium strictum	Chocolate Lily
Bulbine bulbosa	Bulbine Lily



Sophia Bosfelds from Melbourne Uni picking up the SPA seed booty

<i>Caesia calliantha</i>	Blue Grass Lily
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Common Everlasting
<i>Chrysocephalum semipapposum</i>	Clustered Everlasting
<i>Coronidium scorpioides</i>	Button Everlasting
<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Variable Billy Buttons
<i>Leiocarpa panaetiodes</i>	Wooly Buttons
<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i>	Common Raspwort
<i>Hackelia suaveolens</i>	Sweet Hound's Tongue
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman
<i>Leptorhynchos squamatus</i>	Scaly Buttons
<i>Leptorhynchos tenuifolius</i>	Wiry Buttons
<i>Linum marginale</i>	Native Flax
<i>Plantago gaudichaudii</i>	Narrow Plantain
<i>Stylidium graminifolium</i>	Grass trigger plant
<i>Tricoryne elatior</i>	Yellow Rush Lily
<i>Veronica gracilis</i>	Slender Speedwell
<i>Wahlenbergia capillaris</i>	Tufted Bluebell
<i>Wahlenbergia gracilis</i>	Sprawling Bluebell
<i>Wahlenbergia luteola</i>	Yellowish Bluebell
<i>Wahlenbergia stricta</i>	Tall Bluebell



WORKING BEES

YWNA was very fortunate to have had a wonderful co-ordinator, namely Adam Hosken involved for 3/4 of the year of reporting. Adam underscored the sociability of events by hosting the BBQ for hungry volunteers at the end of the day. Adam decided to leave the role due to his increasing involvement in the Junior Field Naturalists and his successor Harry Baxter has been amazing too.

Harry has been incredibly diligent and thoughtful in the role. The detail of leaving signs on the shed wall for future event has attracted the involvement of many a passerby. The average turn out, even on the coldest days has been 20 +. We love that these events are open to all and provide a window for deeper involvement in the reserve through YWNA activities.

All our activity leaders have shown great leadership and flexibility in dealing with all the changing elements of working with people in an extremely dynamic site. The biggest change recently in the planning for these events has been the introduction of Jarrod Fleming as Project Lead on Council. His role has been crucial in providing us with planting information. Our Working Bees have been



Adam on site.

generally held on the last Saturday of the Month. Though we have been hosting two a month recently due to the development of the SPA (Seed Production area).

Working Bees are open for all to come along and learn new skills. They occur at least once a month. They are a great way to get involved in the reserve itself and actively contribute to the growing diverse habitat. Thanks to all those who come along and contribute and also all the active members who help make these days happen smoothly.

Adam handed over to Harry Baxter in March this year as he has taken on a very active role with the Junior Field Naturalists.

Harry Baxter's Working Bee report

The YWNA working bees have been a pleasure to run in 2023. I would like to acknowledge all the predecessors who have established a productive and enjoyably run day for everyone. I would like to show my appreciation to Adam Hoskin for his passing down of the events and his guidance until the handover at the March Working Bee. I would also like to thank YWNAs Assistance; Natalie, Claire, Gio, Sanja, Julie, Aly and my additional task leaders; Tricia and Tania.

The Working Bees built great support across the first half of 2023 with our April Working Bee welcoming the Elwood Primary Nature Ambassadors and an attendance of over 40 passionate volunteers. In May we saw over 900 plants planted on site and 1000 in July. The seed cleaning, propagation and shed area also developed greatly in this time also saw much productivity.

The Community support, passion, expertise and love for the YWNR makes it all possible so Thank you everyone!



Harry Baxter and Working Bee crew

YWNA Waterwatch

263 cumulative volunteer hours has gone into caring for Elster Creek and ponds through our Waterwatch activities.

The YWNA President and VP (Natalie and Ally) were invited as YWNA reps to the Waterwatch and Estuary Watch party for their 30th anniversary in March this year. The Waterwatch program is run through the CMA (Catchment Management Authorities)s and Melbourne Water (for the Melbourne 56 groups) and supported communities in monitoring their own waterways over this 30 year period. The data collected is used for multiple purposes and has been part of many waterway revival projects. For the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve - the long term data was one of the keys to help transform Elsternwick golf course into the now regenerating wetland. Small groups of local people have been the engineers for change and the data has helped them map the way forward. The room (At St Anne's Winery) was filled with passionate volunteers, who are all concerned about water quality and very aware of the impact of climate change in the regions. Ally and I were thrilled to pick up an Outstanding Service award on behalf of YWNA and even more thrilled to meet fellow awardees. The Outstanding Service award reflects the long years this Waterwatch program has been running in Elster Creek and the continuous dedication of many fine volunteers. The program was actually started many moons ago by a young Gio Fitzpatrick and Kate Bulling. Kate passed the coordination role to me three years ago. The role entails keeping in contact with all the volunteers, care of all the equipment and ensuring everything is in date (not always easy). Ensuring that everything needed to monitor is at the site. Collecting all data and putting it up on the Waterwatch website and keeping up a sound website for all the new sound recordings.



The Waterwatch volunteers are the people who help reimagine place and water- who see degraded waterscapes and imagine them thriving and back to some semblance of health. They are all wonderful allies in this shared process. It was fantastic to meet the indomitable Anna Lanigan from Friends of [Moonee Ponds Creek](#). Their group has been imagining a creek free of concrete for 30 years and Anna was describing the fantastic sound of jack hammers - music to her ears! She remembered meeting Gio when he was 16 and has followed the YWNR story with great interest. Her group would love to come and visit us and we would like to gather a group from our lot to pay return visits. There is much knowledge sharing to be had. Interestingly our meeting with all these different local groups has helped shape YWNA's approach in formalising our partnership agreement with Bayside Council.

Richard Akers has remained supportive of us developing new methodologies, so alongside testing of the water using parameters such as turbidity (how clear is the water?), water bugs, chemical testing etc, we are now taking sound samples as well. Sound can potentially reveal more about the hidden life underwater. If you are curious you can [listen here](#) to a sample from the soak in the Chain of Ponds. We have also been talking to Richard about becoming involved in a **Native Fish breeding** program and our shed as recently been accepted as an initial site to house a tank for a native fish breeding program with Native Fish Australia as a partner.

We participated again in a [global listening event](#) (REVEIL 24+1 HOUR BROADCAST 2023) from the reserve bringing the underwater sounds of our local waterway to a global audience. New site for testing - Soak 2 in the Chain of Ponds well established



Ally Soutar YWNA VP, Richard Akers our MW Coordinator, Natalie - YWNA Pres

The Masterplan has the goal to reduce the nitrogen load going in the Bay and we hope to be able to detect an increase in the health of the waterway by both the water testing and witnessing an increase in the water bug biodiversity in the creek and soak. We still plan to add another site soon- depending on volunteer power- to measure the water quality as it enters the reserve up near the New St bridge.

This activity is a for anyone to join in, especially if you want to learn more about the health our local waterway and how to monitor it. We are very happy to have a number of young science students joining in to support the citizen science effort. Waterwatch happens on the last Sunday of every month. Finally a big thank you to all our volunteers who make this process easy and help us keep a regular eye on our local waterway. You are all amazing! And a Big Thank you to our wonderful Melbourne Water Coordinator- Richard Akers.

Natalie Davey- Waterwatch Elster Creek coordinator.





Rowena Moore, Jill Sokol and Glen Adams

LITTER SURVEYS

Elsternwick Park Love Our Street is a BeachPatrol Australia inland group that operates in partnership with YWNA.

We would like to pass on a very sincere and warm thank you to all the volunteers who have contributed to removing rubbish from the YWNR at the monthly clean up events.

Our thanks is also extended to the community who visit the reserve and remove rubbish on their walks, the volunteers engaged in other activities within the YWNR who remove rubbish, the Elsternwick football club who have attended our events and have expressed their full support for maintaining a clean and healthy reserve and the Bayside City Council for their generous funding support.

- From the 1 July 2022 to the 30 June 2023 a total of 74 volunteers attended 11 events to remove 162 kg of rubbish from the YWNR.



- Whilst the chain of ponds area has been relatively free of rubbish the area along the Elster Creek near New Street is a particularly problematic area due to its proximity to two stormwater drains which feed into the creek. This area continues to be a hot spot for hard and soft plastics of various sizes, polystyrene, building materials and waste organic matter. Interestingly this area can look free from rubbish at a distance and it is only on closer inspection that large amounts of rubbish have been found (for example grass has grown over hard plastics which crush under foot and soft plastic are embedded in soil and vegetation). Our volunteers have reported observations of birdlife curiously investigating smaller pieces of plastic as potential food sources and have noted a fallen birds nest composed of a variety of plastics. Within the YWNR along the corner of Glenhuntly Rd and Nepean Highway our volunteers typically find takeaway fast food rubbish and from time to time we discover private party zone areas within the trees and bushes in the area below the chain of ponds toward the Elster Creek.
- We wish to pass on a delightful thanks to Jill Sokol who prepared and secured a small funding grant from the Bayside City Council to allow us to purchase more materials to support our clean up efforts.
- We look forward to continuing these activities and extend a very warm and gracious invitation to all those who wish to come along on the first Sunday of each month.

The YWNR is a magnificent place and we are grateful to everyone for all of their efforts to keep it free from litter.

Glen Adams and Rowena Moore - YWNA / Love Our Street Coordinators



Fly by Night



Yalukit Willam NATURE ASSOCIATION INC

Fly by Night - AGM Report 2023

TEAM:

The Fly by Night team leaders for the 2022/23 year were Dassi Herszberg and Pascale Jacq. Other core team members who have assisted with the running of the survey event and data analysis are Meg Fooks, Jon Brown, and Tania Splawa-Neyman.

AIMS:

There are two main aims of the Fly by Night surveys:

- To create a baseline survey of nocturnal invertebrates and other fauna for comparison in longitudinal studies as changes and improvements are made in the reserve.
- To gauge the health of the reserve by the number of species and variation of invertebrates and nocturnal fauna over time.

HOW:

The Fly by Night surveys monitor and record a variety of invertebrate species using specialist equipment - multi-spectrum lamps and moth sheets. This equipment was purchased using a Bayside SmartyGrants acquittal. Of this funding approximately \$200 is still available for future requirements.

The equipment inventory includes:

- 5 x LepiLED lights
- 5 x portable power banks
- 4 x power chargers
- 4 x moth sheets
- 4 x cloth frames
- 2 x spotlight torches
- 5 x red light torches
- 5 x kit bags

All components are working well, and charging units last the duration of each session, sometimes over six hours. We are still experimenting with the best way of hanging the lantern - we trial different methods each time, hanging from frame, hanging from string adjacent to screen, in order for the best light reflection on the sheet. Regardless, many insects and spiders are attracted to our stations, showing that the light is bright enough for our surveys.

First Fly by Night Survey, 27th August 2022.



Invertebrate species are observed and

photographed by the Fly by Night team and volunteer participants. Images are then uploaded onto our iNaturalist project (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/yalukit-willam-reserve-targetedproject>) to generate data for our ongoing biodiversity monitoring that will also contribute to citizen science. For each survey there are a minimum of 2 stations in distinct areas of the reserve manned by at least 2 people at a time. There is opportunity for movement between stations to observe the different invertebrate species across the reserve.

The survey time for the invertebrate stations is approximately 4 hrs if the conditions are favourable.

SURVEY STATION LOCATIONS

The station locations are in areas of interest for gauging changes in biodiversity as the plant communities and vegetation structure develops over time in the reserve. Station one is a location in the chain of ponds close to billabong one. Station two is located on the southern side of the original water body on the reserve. Station three is located on a grassy patch close to the southern end of what will become the wildflower meadow.



**Map of
Yalukit Willam
Nature Reserve
with Fly by
Night stations one, two and three marked.**

SURVEY DETAILS AND VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

The number of surveys conducted during 2022/23 was 10, with surveys not conducted in July in 2022, January 2023, and June 2023. Two surveys were conducted in October due to rainy weather conditions - the first was postponed, but conducted by Entomological Society of Victoria members,

and the second was also wet but went ahead. We take a break from surveys in the middle of winter when insects are considerably less present and active.

Across these surveys, the number of volunteers range from 3 to 19 with an average of 11. The hours of observation time on site from five surveys was 21 hours with an average of 4 hrs 12 mins for each survey. The total hours of volunteer time contributed for these five surveys was 264 hrs 45 mins. Using this figure the estimated total volunteer contribution across the ten surveys for the year can be estimated at 529 hrs 30 mins.

Other contributions that have not been accounted for in these figures is the writing of the grant application by Sanja Blackburn with support on research and costings by Dassi Herszberg and Pascale Jacq, acquisition of equipment, including making and assembly of the cloth components, and ongoing equipment maintenance and set up. Other considerable contributions include the

outstanding photography work of participants and the uploading of observations into iNaturalist. Other time has been contributed by the Fly by Night team, meeting to develop strategies for data extraction and management.

INVERTEBRATE OBSERVATIONS

Figures from iNaturalist regarding the observations made during the Fly by Night surveys are as follows:

- The number of observers for each survey - the number of participants who have contributed observations to the iNaturalist project, range from 1 to 9 with an average of 5.
- The number of iNaturalist observations across the ten surveys ranges from 13 to 264 with an average of 143 and a total of 1432 during the period.
- The number of invertebrate species observed (Arachnida and Insecta categories) across the ten surveys ranges from 8 to 91 with an average of 58 and a total of 584* during the period. *This number includes duplicates of the same species as occurrences of the same species across multiple surveys are yet to be identified.

^ Table 1: iNaturalist observations and volunteer contributions *There is missing volunteer contribution data - the

Survey Date	iNaturalist Observations	Species Numbers	iNaturalist Observers	Volunteer numbers	Survey time (mins)	Volunteer contribution (min)
27/8/22	250	83	6	19	330	6270
24/9/22	13	8	3	18	unknown	unknown
22/10/22	82	60	4	7	unknown	unknown
29/10/22	15	12	1	3	unknown	unknown
23/11/22	187	85	5	unknown	unknown	unknown
17/12/22	264	91	9	unknown	unknown	unknown
18/2/23	214	76	9	12	225	2700
25/3/23	96	35	6	11	210	2310
22/4/23	223	87	6	11	285	3135
20/5/23	88	47	5	7	210	1470
average	143	58	5	11*	252*	3,177*
sum	1,432	584	53	83*	1,200*	15,885*

average and sum for volunteer and survey time data is calculated with the known figures.

The top ten invertebrate species found at the reserve and recorded in the iNaturalist targeted project during the

2022/23 year are: Victorian Huntsman Spider, Southern Armyworm, Pome Looper, Subidaria Moth, Cosmopolitan Diving Beetle, Apple











Looper, Pond Moth, Tamopsis eucalypti, Leafcurling Sac Spiders, and Australian Bluetail.


^ https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?d1=2022-07-01&d2=2023-06-30&place_id=any&project_id=yalukit-willam-reservetargeted-project&verifiable=any&view=species&iconic_taxa=Arachnida,Insecta

Highlights of the surveys are regularly contributed to the Yalukit Willum Nature Association Facebook page by Daniel Kurek - a member of the Entomological Society of Victoria, regular participant and core member of our project.

Examples of these can be seen in next pages, highlighting unusual and new species for the reserve found during the surveys


Observations

The Word	1,960 OBSERVATIONS	424 SPECIES	231 IDENTIFIERS	27 OBSERVERS
				
Victoriae Handmaiden S... (<i>Aspidiotia victorialis</i>)	Swallow's Armyworm (<i>Persectania swinhonis</i>)	Purse Looper (<i>Aspidiotia victorialis</i>)	Subula laMerli (<i>Aspidiotia victorialis</i>)	Coccinellid Stink B... (<i>Stenocorus suturalis</i>)
				
Apple Looper (<i>Phaenocarpa affinis</i>)	Pond Moth (<i>Pygostolus rufus</i>)	Timonid eucalypti	Leakulung Sac Spiders (<i>Leakulung</i>)	Australian Bluetail (<i>Chrysomelidae</i>)


 Ben Kuroki
 November 10, 2020

Some of the finds from last Saturday's fly by night nocturnal insect survey. One of the best right this year with over 10 species of insects and arachnids recorded some of which are new to the reserve.

Thank you again, Jessica, Jess and Dave for making the evening so enjoyable! If you have not been to one of these events before I would definitely come for the next one in December. It is a great way to learn about the nocturnal insect fauna present in the reserve.




 Dan Kuroki
 December 11, 2020

An interesting find from last Saturday's insect survey: *Leakulung longicauda*

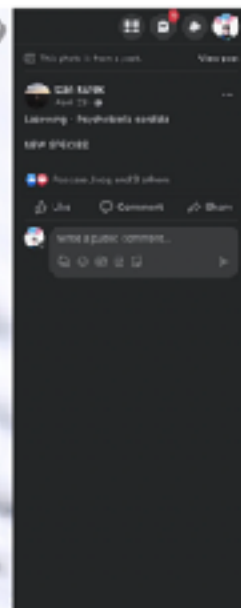
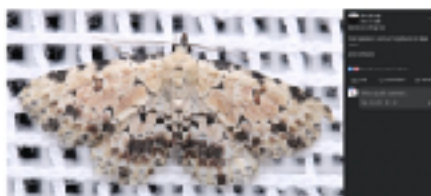
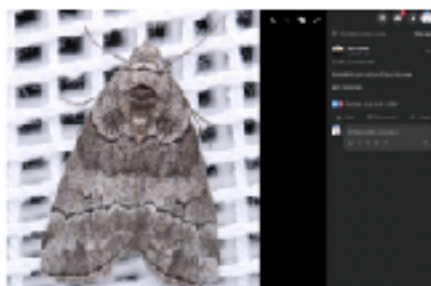
A member of the family *Pompilidae*. *Leakulung longicauda* is a parasite of some beetles (Dermestidae). Female flies will lay their eggs under the beetle's elytra where the beetle cannot reach. When the eggs hatch the fly will consume and kill the beetle from the inside.

The genus seems to be very under recognized and this photo is possibly the first ever taken! This species, *Leakulung longicauda*, has been highlighted in the value of insecticide, such as the one we are currently performing on the reserve.



USM KANAK
April 22 · 10

Some of the finds from last night's "In the Field" nocturnal insect survey.
Was a great evening with a handful of new moth species observed along with a few other insects.
Thank you again to our team and to the community for organizing and running these surveys.



BIRD SURVEYS



Crimson Rosella- Danny Fog

“It’s been a real joy seeing the park transform from golf course to a beautiful environmental reserve. It’s also been wonderful seeing so many people being involved in so many activities. “ Bob Tammick

Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve bird survey summary 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

Survey volunteers

In the fiscal year July 2022 to June 2023, 27 volunteers contributed a combined total of 380 hours to 12 monthly bird surveys in Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve. Observations and photography accounted for 308 hours. Coordination, data recording and report writing claimed an additional 72 hours.

Observer numbers ranged between 8 in August 2022 and 17 in March and May 2023.

Bob Tammick coordinated the surveys, which were led by Birdlife Bayside president Tania Ireton and Bob. In their absence, survey groups were led by Sue Forster, Stephen Machet and Laura Paterson.

Bob & Alyson Tammick and Tania Ireton recorded bird observations, posted data to Birdlife Australia’s birddata website and maintained Excel spreadsheets. Sue Forster and Tania Ireton provided monthly reports for YWNA website, and Danny Fog was chief photographer. Additional photos were supplied by Sue Forster, Stephen Machet, Fran Pfeiffer, Jo Samuel-King and Bob Tammick.

Bird species recorded in Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve 2022/23

Wetland (23)

Eurasian Coot, Little Black Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Australasian Darter, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Little Grassbird, Australasian Grebe, Silver Gull, Hardhead, White-faced Heron, Australian White Ibis, Masked Lapwing, Brown Quail, Buff-banded Rail, Australian Reed-warbler, Welcome Swallow, Purple Swamphen, Chestnut Teal, Grey Teal.

'Terrestrial' (17)

Grey Butcherbird, Gang-gang Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Little Corella, Long-billed Corella, Pied Currawong, Tawny Frogmouth, Musk Lorikeet, Rainbow Lorikeet, Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark, Red-rumped Parrot, Crested Pigeon, Little Raven, Eastern Rosella, Little Wattlebird, Red Wattlebird,

Pest/feral (6)

E, and F. Elster Canal was also surveyed as Area G. Each observer surveyed 4 areas. Everyone began with Area A, around the original pond, and then divided into 2 groups. One group surveyed B, C and G, and the other D, E and F, around the new Chain of Ponds. Each area was surveyed for 20 minutes and records were made of bird species and numbers.

Survey data

The total number of bird species recorded in 2022/23 was 46 (23 wetland, 17 'terrestrial', 6 pest/feral).

The most species recorded across all areas on a single survey date was 33 in March 2023; the least was 23 in July 2022.

Bird numbers were consistently higher in 2023 than in 2022. The highest total for all 7 areas was 460 in April 2023; the lowest was 292 in July 2022. Average survey abundance was 368.

In 2023, species diversity and bird abundance increased throughout the Chain of Ponds as vegetation matured and nets were removed. The highest species diversity by area was 23, recorded in F in April. Area E also recorded 17 species in April. These were the highest species counts for E and F since surveys began in July 2019. They also had their highest-ever bird count in April 2023: 70 in E and 115 in F. The lowest species diversity was in areas without water: B, C and D.

The largest number of birds recorded in any section was 141 in Area G, Elster Canal, in January 2023. Breeding Chestnut Teal accounted for more than half the total.

The most unusual or rare bird visitors recorded during surveys were a Hardhead duck (August to September), a Buff-banded Rail (March), a Brown Quail (May) and 5 Gang-gang Cockatoos (May/June). Casual sightings of additional new species were recorded on Yalukit Willam Nature Association's Facebook page between surveys.

The most abundant species were Rainbow Lorikeets followed by Noisy Miners, both consistently found in every area.

Despite increased species diversity in the Chain of Ponds, some regularly recorded species were noticeably absent in later months. Last recorded sightings were Australian Reed-warbler (October), Tawny Frogmouth (February), Red-rumped Parrot (March) and Little Grassbird (April).

Species recorded breeding in Yalukit Willam and along Elster Canal included: Chestnut Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Australian Wood Duck, Purple Swamphen, Magpie-lark, Tawny Frogmouth and Noisy Miner. Australian Magpie, Eastern Rosella, Rainbow Lorikeet, Little Raven, Crested Pigeon and Common Starling also showed breeding activity.

Sue Forster

4 September 2023

Lastly thanks to Sue Forster for writing up our monthly surveys in such an informative and interesting way, co-leading the surveys when Alyson and I were away. Tania Ireton for sharing her immense knowledge of birds and for leading the survey in areas B, C, and G. Stephen Machet for such invaluable assistance and ongoing enthusiasm. Danny Fogg for taking such amazing photos. All the volunteers over the past year.

Bob Tammick (YWNA Sub- Committee- On Reserve Activities)

Report of trapped birds at Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve

Pascale Jacq 25th April 2023



Ducks resting- Sue Forster



Bird watchers- Danny Fogg



Ducklings- Danny Fog

The following report is based on the data recorded by the team of volunteers who regularly checked the nets around the ponds after stage 1 planting of the Chain of ponds at the reserve. We started regularly checking as a team and reporting daily data after regular observed drownings of ducklings or stuck birds within nets in February and March 2022 soon after the nets were placed over plantings.

Volunteer team:

Dassi Herszberg, Josephine Samuel-King, Pascale Jacq, Bob Tammik, Alyson Svenson, Imogen Mannis, Laura Paterson, Kath Pelletti, Gio Fitzpatrick

Volunteers checked all nets at the Chain of Ponds daily in a roster, sometimes several times daily. Members of public also posted alerts of trapped birds on the Facebook page and our team would coordinate an attempt to rescue as soon as we could (sometimes in minutes, other times we had insufficient information and couldn't find reported entrapments).

Over a 12 month period:

127 birds released by volunteers

9 deceased trapped birds

The bird rescue team took a minimal intervention approach. This generally involved opening the doors to the nets where the birds were trapped, exiting the scene and then returning later, ideally finding the bird or birds had found their way out.

There were a number of times, however, towards late 2022/ early 2023 when volunteers had the unfortunate choice of either watching ducklings die from drowning or make a hole in the nets in order to save their lives. These holes were only made after consultation with the group and only as a last resort. All these incidents were documented. It is also noteworthy that no netting was ever removed by the group.

Peak times for bird entrapment coincided with the breeding season. In particular, from September through to early February was the peak bird entrapment period.

Main findings:

1. The netting used was wildlife friendly from the perspective that there were no animal entanglements reported. However, the net construction was not.
2. Bird entrapment was most problematic between September and February.
3. It appeared that most birds were entering the nets from the water side of the nets, and when they panicked due to separation from their families, attempted to exit via the waterside, often resulting in drowning. Other common cause of death was separation of ducklings from their families.
4. Nets which were too lengthy (Ponds 2, 3, Upper Soak, Lower Billabong) with only 2 doors despite their length, were most troublesome.
5. Nets with doors adjacent to plantings/path were more difficult to rescue than those opening to waterside (resulting in drowning of ducklings separated from their parents/families which were outside the net in water). Once holes were permanently put in on water side, the birds could enter and exit freely with no further drownings.

TOTAL trappings per pond 2023:	Pond 2 (3), Pond 3 (4), Pond 4 (1), Pond 5 (2), Pond 6 (1), Lower Billabong (2), Upper Billabong (0), Lower Soak (0), Upper Soak (3)	Bird species most caught: Pacific Black (23), Magpie Lark (1), Noisy Minor (1), Cormorant (1), Starling (1), Wood Duck (1)	regularly trapped and released older juveniles regularly got re-trapped in nets and were difficult to remove despite their previous experiences. Doors had to be left open over night, or holes ripped in nets, luckily none	Released (26), deceased (2), unknown (1)
TOTAL trappings per pond 2022	Pond 2 (16), Pond 3 (18), Pond 4 (6), Pond 5 (4), Pond 6 (12), Lower Billabong (11), Upper Billabong (1), Lower Soak (6), Upper	Bird species most caught: Pacific Black (44), Swampen (16), Chestnut Teal (17), Wood Duck (11), Grey Teal (7), Magpie Lark (6), Cormorant (3), Dusky Moorhen (2), Noisy Minor (2), Grebe (2), Hardhead (1), Magpie (1)		Released (101), Deceased (7), unknown (?)

Recommendations:

YWNA bird rescue team recommends that, whilst the netting used was wildlife friendly, the netting design was not. It caused multiple, recurrent wildlife entrapments and deaths. These deaths were preventable and distressing to both the animals, the public and volunteers. This is an unacceptable outcome from an ethical and animal cruelty perspective.



Buff Banded Rail - Jo Samuel King

The netting design needs to be re-evaluated in order to prevent further entrapments and deaths. In particular:

- Timing-ideally nets would be avoided during the breeding season
- If netting is to be used during the breeding season the nets need to be redesigned. Some possible solutions include:
 - o Doors on the ends or on the water side
 - o Shorter net coverage and/or more doors
 - o During duckling season, nets to be pinned well to the ground and checked several times daily, algae is removed from surface of water to reduce drownings of those which are not able to dive.
 - o Areas of no plantings should not be netted. Most algae grows here attracting feeding birds and these areas were one of the most common trappings which was pointless.

The YWNR bird rescue team have spent the last two years studying bird behaviour around netting. We are keen to be involved in the next phase of net design, so that bird entrapment can be minimised and well managed.

YWNA's Website

YWNA launched our new website in May 2022. This was a rather daunting task and we want to warmly thank YWNA member Andrew Julian for all his work to create the new website with our Communications team. He has given and continues to give countless hours of technical support on a regular basis. We now have an easy to use website with all the information needed about our volunteer activities within the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve and how you can be involved.

Everything from upcoming events, to data collected in the reserve, to updates on the construction itself, stories, ideas and incredible photography from our keen-eyed supporters from the Reserve are now available. We hope the website will make it easier for the community to engage with the wetland project and stay up to date. The new membership portal is now automated and membership is dated from payment annually.

YWNA formed as an organisation representing the views and supporting contributions of the community to the formerly named Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve. Historically, it helped lead the campaign to transform the golf course into a wetland oasis, bringing together diverse community groups and individuals who shared the same goal. YWNA is keen to keep involving the community with this exciting project, to learn more about how to actively participate in transforming the former golf course. The website will strengthen our goal to strengthen our role to speak up for the ecological integrity of the unique natural world that is being created and the key principles of the masterplan itself. There is a need to update regularly and we hope to bring fresh perspectives to our community and activities through these pages. We are also aiming to ensure the website is as up to date as possible.

What does the website mean for members?

The new website has an updated membership portal which will make it easier to manage your membership with the YWNA. Membership now operates on a yearly direct debit basis, which is easy to cancel at any time. As a member of the association, you'll have opportunities for input into discussions, be active on the ground and hear first-hand about the masterplan stages, volunteering and exchange ideas for the nature reserve.

Members benefit from:

- Email newsletters – updates on the stages of progress of the Nature Reserve
- Volunteer opportunities- join groups to clean up, planting, flora and fauna surveys in the park
- Invite to the AGM & vote to elect YWNA committee members
- Share knowledge & learn about the local habitat, wetlands, cultural history, plantings and contribute your skills to create a unique community place

We look forward to supporting a flourishing community of active YWNA volunteers and members.

Grants

1. Fly By Night Grant- Bayside Council - New Program or Community Initiative

See Fly by Night report for more information.

2. Victorian Landcare Grant -\$500

3. Palais Grant for Oral storytelling project- More interviews are planned for November/December 23.



YWNA VP Alison Soutar interviewing founding member Geoffrey Love for the Story Telling project

YWNA

Patron- N'arwee't Carolyn Briggs AM Committee and Sub Committees



YWNA Committee for 2022/23

President- Natalie Davey

Vice President -Alison Soutar

Secretary- Michael Gulliver

Treasurer- Sanja Blackburn

(Extra) Ordinary Members

Membershiop-Gina Fiske

Comms-Rosie Grech

Naturalist-Gio Fitzpatrick

Ecologist-Dr Tricia Wevill

Plant Lab Coordinator- Claire Hudson

Flooding and Water-Geoff Love

Sub Committee

Plant Lab and SPA- Claire Hudson/ Julie Beatty

Fly by Night-Dassi Herszberg/ Pascal Jacq- Tania Plawa-Neyman joining

Bird Surveys- Bob Tammik/ Alyson Svenson

Working Bees- Adam Hosken/ Harry Baxter

Litter Surveys- Glen Adams/Rowena Moore (partnership activity with Love our Streets)

Waterwatch- Natalie Davey

Volunteer safety-Sandy Morrison

Youth Ambassador- Sienna Cross



Gang Gang- Danny Fog



Tours and Educational Outreach

YWNA Committee have been very active in sharing the reserve love with other groups interested in how the project is progressing and sharing the work of our Association. The tours provide an excellent opportunity for knowledge sharing and networking., as well as taking in all the latest in the reserve.



Above -Tour taken by the Friends of Westgate Reserve with Gio Fitzpatrick and Natalie. Aug 22

Below- Friends of Cranbourne Gardens visiting.

Gio and Natalie took a group from the friends of Cranbourne Gardens around as a Christmas treat in December 2022! These events are a terrific way of connecting to other groups and to compare and contrast what we are doing within the reserve and as a volunteer group with other equally passionate and involved community members. We were also offered a tour of the Cranbourne Gardens in return which we hope to arrange for Plant Lab/SPA volunteers soon.

On a rainy day near the end of last year (22) Natalie gave a talk to the Education team of Melbourne Water and then gave a true wetland tour through the Chain of Ponds! (See right)

As reported last year, the reserve inspired Sienna Cross. She had approached YWNA when she was in Grade 5 as she wished to connect her school community Elwood Primary, with the reserve. She set up a Nature Ambassador program which is still running today.

Gio and I (ND) took a very eager group of Elwood primary kids for a tour at the end of last year (22) to keep up the momentum. This was also Siena's last year in Primary school. Her work in communicating YWNA activities in the reserve through newsletters and comms is keeping a steady flow of these kids involved in on reserve activities. Sienna is now in a senior school but still very involved in this program that she helped fledge through both her comms work and directly getting involved.

Here's some direct feed back from some of the young participants who took part in a YWNA working bee from the Elwood Primary Nature ambassador program.



Lila:

On Saturday, the 23rd of September we went to Elsternwick Park to help plants survive. We also planted trees there too. We got big clumps of plants and turned them into lots of separate little plants- we made over 330 plants. We saw some little creatures in the soil, like centipedes. I got a sausage sizzle at the end. I loved helping the environment- it felt good. By Lila (aged 6, at Elwood Primary School).

Ava:

On Saturday, the twenty third of September we went to Elsternwick park for the worker bee workshop. It was absolutely amazing. We potted about 330 plants. There were 3 species of water grass. These plants will grow in the nursery until they are big enough to be planted in the park near the new lakes. I can't wait to plant them. At the end there was a sausage sizzle. It was worth getting a little bit dirty! By Ava (aged 8, Elwood PS).





Sienna talking to fellow Elwood Primary students last year. Students loving exploring the reserve.



YWNA members and committee took part in a tour organised by the Ecocentre through the reserve and down to the sea along the canal in late 2022.

Ministerial Tour of the Reserve

Yalukit Willam Nature Association was proud to host the Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek this year. The occasion was her first visit to the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve. Gio Fitzpatrick gave Tanya a tour of the Reserve before we all met in the YWNA shed for lunch. The day involved many from the YWNA committee, YWNA affiliates - the Ecocentre and PECAN (Port Phillip Emergency Climate Action Network), Ms Zoe Daniel MP, Louise Crawford, CoPP and Bayside Council officers and Councillors. YWNA's youth Nature Ambassador from Elwood Primary, Sienna Cross was there to represent the upcoming generation of nature stewards.

A warm thank you to Macnamara MP Josh Burns and staff, who were instrumental in helping arrange the visit. It was so meaningful for us to be able to exchange ideas and thoughts about the reserve and community involvement with this project directly with the Minister.





Chain of Ponds completion

The chain of ponds in the North East Corner of the reserve is the first stage of the masterplan implementation and the area is now open to the public. Central to this created wetland is the Yalukit Willam Knowledge Sharing (Yulendji Djeembana) space and this is not yet open to the public. Though there was a name change event held with N'arwee't Carolyn Briggs present. The final removal of the gates around the Chain of Ponds took place at the beginning of this reporting period. The ponds have three clear objectives:

- Amenity
- Habitat Creation- in particular frog habitats.
- To provide alternative habitat for wildlife, during the disturbance to existing wetlands which will occur as the next phase of the Masterplan in the Southern wetlands takes off next year.

The design of the chain of ponds has been very carefully thought through to maximise the habitat values of the site. Just one small of example of this is the design of the chain of ponds with frogs in mind.

The creation of frog habitats has many challenges. In particular, Gambusia (known as mosquito fish) infest most waterways in Australia, eat tadpoles and therefore prevent the successful reintroduction of frogs into waterways. This can be overcome but it takes some very clever design to manage. With this in mind, the chain of ponds has some very interesting features:

- It will essentially be an “offline” wetland system-i.e. it will be separated from the current Elster Creek by a series of filters and barriers. This limits opportunities for Gambusia to enter the chain of ponds. Unfortunately this design ‘idea’ was compromised during a flood event earlier in last year and we now know that Gambia has entered the C of P system.
- It has water-bodies that collect water from alternate water sources-i.e. the roofs of surrounding buildings. These water sources will be free of Gambusia.

- A number of the ponds will be ephemeral -i.e. they will dry out in summer. Native fish and frogs thrive in ephemeral wetlands, whereas Gambusia do not.
- The water levels of the ponds will be able to be controlled. This will allow for drainage of wetlands and clearance of Gambusia on an as needed basis.
- Construction started on the 1st September 2020 and was completed in June 2022.
- YWNA has been working hard over this year to infill planting where needed to develop a more biodiverse habitat. This has also included adding some logs to the area (with permission).

Membership:

Our membership stands at 183 members.

We have a small, skilled and dedicated communications and membership team and look forward to



YWNA members on a mission - Tania, Gio, Thomas and Sienna

sharing regular updates and news between the committee, sub-committees, our membership and the wider community. YWNA members have told us they highly value and are passionate about our vision and plans to be part of creating a unique nature reserve.. We hope that our new member friendly YWNA website helps you keep in contact with our activities and we use our Facebook for regular communications on progress, notice of events and stories. Facebook had become an open place for members to share their nature experiences in the reserve. Our volunteer activities are planned and organised to engage active members in planting, bird surveys, social events, education of native species and Cultural education of Country- so everyone can find something that suits them to engage with the Nature Reserve.

Our Facebook Group membership has grown rapidly this year and has now reached over 2700 members. We have a wide range of interesting and pictures posted daily relating to the reserve from different members, as well as updates to keep everyone informed on the progress and activities in the park.

We are planning community events for the New Year and looking forward to being able to share and celebrate the extraordinary opportunity to strengthen the communities' stewardship of this precious wetland home.



Affiliated Membership

Yalukit Willam Association encourages affiliation with other groups and not for profit organisations who support our vision for the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve, share common interests and are involved in environmental activities and community engagement. We value learning and sharing ideas, discussing issues and creating opportunities for collaboration with partners.

Groups can apply to become an Affiliated Member and partner will benefit from:

- Sharing knowledge and information
- Networking meetings, forums and social events to share
- News on current plans, projects and resources
- Voting at the AGM meeting
- Cross Promotion of events and call out for volunteer and community activities.

Our Affiliated Members:

Port Phillip EcoCentre



The EcoCentre actively builds relationships, educates and demonstrates sustainable environmental practice and strengthen people's connection to the natural world. The EPA shares knowledge and resources, forums, educational projects and is supported to plan and progress EPNR activities.

Photo from a visit to the Plant Lab from our key affiliate's EcoCentre's Multicultural Bay Ambassadors program.

Port Phillip Emergency Climate Action Network (PECAN)

PECAN aims to create and sustain a strong climate action movement in Port Phillip to address the climate crisis. A Plan sets out actions necessary to mitigate our local impact on

the environment. The EPA shares knowledge, support for projects, forums and education events to promote its common goals such as flood mitigation and water sensitive design to develop an environmental sustainable nature reserve.

Love Our Street

Love Our Street 3184 is a local group in Elwood committed to keeping our community beautiful and promoting litter awareness. It holds monthly Street Clean days with volunteers to clean up litter in streets, parks and shopping centres. YWNA has formed a partnership with 3186 Elsternwick Park Love our Street Group which meets monthly in the park for litter collection to protect the wildlife from hazards and litter entering Elster Creek and flow into Port Phillip Bay.

Elwood Flood Action Group(eFlag)

EFlag aims to inform the community about the impact of flooding on homes, shopping centres, open spaces and amenities. Elster Creek flows downstream through EPNR and in severe weather events has caused floods. Local people learn about how to prepare for and respond to future floods and advocate to government about mitigating flood events. The EPA shares knowledge, plans and participates in forums to improve policy and plans for flood mitigation. Geoff Love is Convenor and on EPA Committee.

Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council (Aboriginal Corporation)

PO Box 2125, St Kilda West- info@boonwurrung.org.au

Friends of Elster Creek(FoEC)

FoEC is a local group of community volunteers who want to protect, improve and expand areas of habitat for indigenous flora and fauna along Elster Creek, generate educational opportunities for the public regarding biodiversity and conservation, reduce pollution flowing into Port Phillip Bay and improve the aesthetic appeal of Elster Creek. The EPA shares ideas, knowledge, volunteer activities such as bird surveys, nest box installation and revegetation to enhance Elster Creek, including EPNR. Joint members of EPA & FOEC

Bayside Climate Change Action Group (BCCCAG)

BCCCAG are a non-profit community organisation that works to reduce the impact of climate change and promote sustainability by creating and delivering information, education, plans and facilitating action and influencing decision-makers. EPA shares information and group promotes activities.

Bayside Friends Environment Network (BEFN)

BEFN helps people care for the environment by helping them establish a knowledgeable and caring relationship and provides a forum for environmental volunteers to exchange ideas, skills and experiences to network with others beyond bayside and runs working bees and education for the community. EPA exchanges information and ideas.

Friends of Native Wildlife as part of BEFN affiliation

Friends of Native Wildlife are Bayside (Melbourne, Australia) residents active in conserving local native fauna. They promote conservation of our wildlife through education and engagement, surveys, advising local authorities, and working to improve habitat. The Friends of Native Wildlife have held a Bat Survey event in the Reserve and plan their Breakfast with the Birds here this Spring.

The Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens

The world's botanic gardens are custodians of critically needed scientific and horticultural knowledge, and their landscapes a source of inspiration, learning and a place for positive social change. The Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens brings together botanic organisations and friends to take action to protect and enable adaptation of botanic landscapes in a changing climate. By working together, we can protect our treasured botanic landscapes. The time for working together is now.



Elster Creek Catchment Community Advisory Panel meeting and tour through the Chain of Ponds. Gina Fiske and our erstwhile Committee member Geoffrey Love are on the panel. Council Officer Paul Gibbs in fluro

Flood Mitigation

A key pillar of the masterplan for the reserve is flood mitigation. Two YWNA committee members Geoffrey Love and Gina Fiske have been actively working on committees to keep the community voice strong as Melbourne Water moves forward on its plans to build a [diversion drain](#).

Although flooding can occur at any time, historical records show that high intensity and short duration rainfall events can cause flash flooding in and around Elwood, and prolonged rainfall can cause the Elwood Canal to flood. It generally affects small areas but damage can be severe. Elwood floods have often happened from November to February. To be prepared, know if you live in a flood area and be safe, go to Elwood Local Flood Guide map and information on this [link](#). Though flooding cannot be eliminated entirely, increasing the capacity of the existing drainage network aims to reduce the impacts of flooding for Elwood and surrounding suburbs.

Gina Fiske, Roger Burns and April Seymore all contributed a brilliant summary of the community work into flooding in this catchment in the recent Parliamentary inquiry. When we are free to release the detail to the community we will share with our members, as it is a very helpful and detailed overview.

The investigative on the site has Wetlands design we understand volumes coming are hoping to hopefully in



work Melbourne Water is doing meant that the Southern is in a slight holding pattern until exactly what the expected water through the reserve will be. We learn more about this very soon, October/Nov 23.

Melbourne Water Diversion Map



Vision into reality-water is treasure





2023/2024 The year ahead:

The year ahead will be another huge year for the Yalukit Willam Nature Association. We look forward to:

- The completion of the Yalukit Willam Meeting/knowledge (Yulendji Djeembana) place
- Working with our Patron N'arwee't Carolyn Briggs on Cultural priorities
- Completion of A guide to the ecological restoration of the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve from YWNA Naturalist Gio Fitzpatrick
- Cultural and community celebratory event in March
- Ongoing work to strengthen our relationship and partnership with Bayside Council
- Participating in the creation of the wildflower meadow and ongoing development of the SPA and Plant Lab. Participating in the ecological framework for the Southern Wetlands.
- Participation on the Committee of Management to maintain community voice for nature and supporting in the ongoing efforts to keep the aims of the Masterplan on track
- Increase in our membership to support the growing range of activities
- More grants to strengthen our understanding of the reserve such as fish (eel) surveys and development of educational materials and more.
- Completing our oral history project

- Strengthening our Sub Committees
- Reinvigorating survey methodologies to reflect the changing shape of the reserve-and improving our data management
- Improved communications with members and the wider community
- Development of a schools program/ educational resources
- Plant Lab and SPA going from strength to strength- learning from our past seasons.
- Empowering community stewardship of the reserve
- Completion of shed fit out and infrastructure development in the Plant Lab
- Consultation with Council for our expertise in the local habitat and ecology. Continuing developing our partnership with Bayside City Council
- Consultation on the Gateway building
- Strengthening partnerships with schools and other interested groups.
- Hosting community events to advance the collaborative impact of shared partnerships
- Involvement in the native Fish recovery project
- Supporting internships for a growing body of research connected to the reserve, including health and well being outcomes.



Pascal and David - YWNA active volunteers



YWNA shed disappearing into the gardens. Shed Gardens completed this year.



Chain of Ponds prior to net removal

YWNA Treasurer's Report 2022/23				
Cash at bank 30th June 2022				\$7,707
Income to 30th June 23				
<u>Fixed Income</u>				
Membership income		\$2,665		
Interest income		\$52		
			\$2,717	
<u>Variable Income</u>				
	<u>Grant-Related</u>			
	Grant income	\$6,500		
	Non-Grant Related			
	Gofundme income	\$ -		
	Private donations income	\$100		
			\$6,600	
Total Income				\$9,317
Expenses to 30th June 23				
<u>Fixed Expenses</u>				
Insurance				
	Property	\$450		
	Association			
	Public Liability	\$655		
	Voluntary Workers	\$ -		
Shed lease		\$417		
Electricity		\$ -		
Dues & Subscriptions		\$581		
Merchant fees and bank charges		\$99		
Consumer Affairs Annual Payment		\$ -		
			\$2,202	
<u>Variable Expenses</u>				
	<u>Grant-Related</u>			
	Equipment (BCC Fly By Night)	\$3,700		
	<u>Non-Grant Related</u>			
	Plants	\$312		
	Food & Bev	\$744		
	Consulting	\$500		
	Communications	\$31		
	Miscellaneous	\$64		
	Stationary	\$81		
	Equipment	\$681		
	Learning & Development	\$413		
	AGM Expenses	\$770		
			\$7,294	
Total Expenses				\$9,497
Cash at bank 30th June 2023				\$7,527.40

FY23 Impact Snapshot



Wildflower seeds
produced and
harvested



Tube stock produced



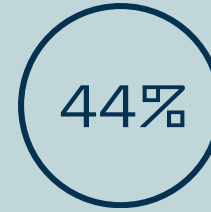
Plants planted



Bird Surveys
conducted



Bird species
recorded



increase in bird
abundance from Jul
22 to Jun 23



Fly by Night Surveys
conducted



Invertebrate species
recorded per survey



No. of invertebrate
observations per survey



Birds released
from nets



Rubbish removed from
YWNR



Volunteer hours



I would like to thank all the incredible and hardworking YWNA committee, sub committee members and the wonderful people that have had a hand in this report. Many many people have contributed to the collective outcome of our work as an active Community Association this year. I wish the 23/24 YWNA committee all strength to their collective bow. A massive thank you to the broader community for all their volunteer hours invested in this wonderful sanctuary.

Natalie Davey

YWNA President

This report is dedicated to the inspiring memory of Geoffrey Love

