

## Quarterly Newsletter

Incorporation No. A0010136R

ABN No.: 57 567 161 098

Winter 2021

Edition 49



**Friends of the  
Maribyrnong Valley  
Inc.**

## Our Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held on the 1st of September via our zoom meeting.

All positions were declared vacant after reports were presented.

If you require a copy of the report and you have not received it, please let us know. [info@fmvonline.com](mailto:info@fmvonline.com)

The officer bearers for the next 12 months are:

**President:** Judy Ingram

**Secretary:** Maelor Himbury

**Grants Coordinator:** Judy Ingram

**Community Representatives:** Rosemary Mc Kenzie, David Pepper, Tony Baldwin, and Craig Rowley. We welcomed our new committee members and thanked them for stepping up at this strange and difficult time in volunteering. We thanked the past committee members who have decided to step aside for all their hard work over the past years.

**Vice President:** Rebecca Luxford

**Treasurer:** Boris Scignari / Rashida Brown

**Web Site Coordinator:** Warwick Somerville

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## Biodiversity jewel on the Maribyrnong River under threat

*An article by Adrian Marshall, Grassy Plains Network*

Solomon Heights Grassland is probably the most ecologically significant patch of remnant native vegetation anywhere along the Maribyrnong River's length. Located on the west side of the Maribyrnong in Sunshine North, just downstream from Brimbank Park, Solomon Heights Grassland runs from the Melbourne–Adelaide rail line across the never-built 1920s subdivision of Solomon Heights Estate and the developing River Valley Estate, down the escarpment to the river. The area is home to the "Big 5" of grassland conservation – critically endangered Growling Grass Frogs, Striped Legless Lizards, Golden Sun Moths and Spiny Rice-flowers (which are not actually spiny) within a Kangaroo Grass dominated grassland.

Solomon Heights Grassland is a major patch of biodiversity in the parkland ecological corridor of the Maribyrnong River valley – just ask the Eastern Grey Kangaroos hopping through, or the soaring Wedge-tailed Eagles overhead.

Native grasslands like Solomon Heights are the most endangered habitat type in Victoria (if not Australia) and are home to wonderful plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. These grasslands once spread all the way from Melbourne's West to the South Australian border, but now only a tiny 2% remain.

This amazing patch of urban remnant vegetation is under threat from inappropriate development. It is also under threat from mismanagement, weeds, dumping and vandalism. Recently one landholder built an illegal bund wall with hundreds of tonnes of contaminated soil. An additional worry is the construction impacts of the new airport rail link that will cross the Maribyrnong River at exactly where the grassland is located.

The Grassy Plains Network represents ecologists, community and academics concerned about the ongoing decline of grasslands such as Solomon Heights. We are campaigning to save Solomon Heights Grassland as a conservation reserve and as a unique outdoor place for the benefit of the public. We are asking Brimbank Council to show their conservation leadership and to bring to the table the resources needed to save Solomon Heights. We know the task is going to be complex: there are many landholders, State and Federal agencies, Melbourne Water, the Traditional Owners, as well as the Airport Rail Link, all involved. But we have to act now. And to not act means the grassland continues to decline.

Solomon Heights Grassland can be a beautiful flowering meadow, a peaceful open space providing a very special nature experience among the many jewels along the Maribyrnong River. It should not be cleared and developed.

You can find out more about our campaign and what you can do at our website:

[grassyplains.net.au/solomonheights](http://grassyplains.net.au/solomonheights)

## **Update from Melbourne Water and the Victorian Fisheries Authority**

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) and Melbourne Water are working together to implement the Maribyrnong River Native Fish Revival Project ([vfa.vic.gov.au/Maribyrnong\\_revival](http://vfa.vic.gov.au/Maribyrnong_revival)). This environmental project aims to restore the environmental values of the river for all river users. As part of the project, there will be purpose-built habitat structures installed on the Lower Maribyrnong, between the Braybrook escarpment and the Flemington Racecourse at eight key in-water locations. These works are currently planned to occur in November. The habitat being installed includes rocky refuges and complex timber structures, which are anchored using a concrete star to secure them in the riverbed. These structures will support a range of native fish, such as the Estuary perch (*Macquaria colonorum*), by providing refuges where the local fish population can avoid predators and strong flows, as well as providing spawning sites. The VFA and funds from recreational license fees are also supporting an extensive stocking program to stock a total of 300,000 juvenile estuary perch to rebuild the rivers native fish population. A fish population evaluation survey will be conducted after the habitat installation has been completed. This will be compared with a survey previously completed, to assess how fish populations may have changed after the habitat has been installed. For further information on the project, please contact Hui King Ho Fisheries Manager, VFA on 0407 987 003.

## **NEW Proposed Projects for 2022**

### **Landcare/DELWP Grant:**

Stage 1 of Wildlife Sanctuary protection fence at Frog Hollows, Maribyrnong.

### **West Gate Neighbourhood Fund - Transforming Neighbourhoods Grants:**

Revegetating Braybrook Escarpment for native wildlife.

### **Melbourne Water Grants: -**

Stage 1- Calder Rise, Keilor weed control and revegetation.

Stage 4- Burndap Park, Maribyrnong understory/weed control.

Stage 1- Cranwell Park Braybrook, weed control and revegetation.

Support grant from Melbourne Water helping with our administration costs.