

yrka bulletin

The quarterly newsletter of Yarra Riverkeeper Association (yrka)
Issue 16 Summer 2009-10



← Massive Abbotsford development threatens river amenity

The bend in the Yarra, just upstream of Victoria Bridge, is a picturesque spot enjoyed by nearby residents, walkers and bike riders, rowers and paddlers, and much indigenous wildlife. It is one of the few remaining natural riverine settings in the inner suburbs. But a proposal before the City of Yarra to construct 11 storeys of 586 apartments with restaurants and bars on the Abbotsford riverbank – the so-called Honeywell site – could severely damage the environmental and recreational values of this place. Yrka has joined a host of objectors against the development. (LEFT: Image of proposed development.)

Posters target litter in the Yarra

Students at Anderson Creek Primary school recently produced over 200 posters urging people to think about the Yarra's health. Most highlighted the dangers that litter pose to platypus in the river. The posters were entered into a competition organised by Lyndy Gilbert of the Friends of Warrandyte State Park and an active yrka member. Yrka was a proud supporter of the poster competition.



Megan's entry



The winning poster artists



← Our Yarra and the Lonely Planet

Tony and Maureen Wheeler, well known authors and founders of the Lonely Planet series of travel books, joined Rod and Ian for a cruise on the Yarra. The Wheelers' many interests include a raft of environmental and social issues. Being riverside residents they have a special connection with the Yarra. Read Tony's story of their river cruise at http://www.lonelyplanet.com/tonywheeler/travel_blogs/up_the_yarra_rive/



← **See You Later Alligator** On a recent yrka boat patrol, a raft of the dreaded Alligator Weed was sighted mid-river near the Johnston Street Bridge. This infestation is the first known to yrka below Dights Falls, although it is found in nearby tributaries and the river bank in Studley Park. The weed thrives along waterways choking out native plants.

Alligator Weed has caused untold crop losses and enormous environmental damage in the US and China. It is a major nuisance in Sydney and is slowly gaining a foothold in Victoria. Due to its invasiveness and adaptability it is designated a Weed of National Significance. Yrka's Rod Ingham (right) and Parks Victoria's Peter Lynch (left) have been scooping the infestation from the river and seeking to prevent its spread downstream.

A Special Mention. Joining us on a boat trip in August was the editor of CSIRO's respected ECOS magazine, which enjoys a wide circulation locally and internationally. Afterwards our input was sought for a two-page article entitled 'Championing Urban Rivers' in the magazine's December 2009 issue. It examines the critical Yarra issues identified by yrka, and mentions our important "on location" work. The issue can be purchased from CSIRO Publishing, or found in a number of local libraries and on-line via the link:

http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?act=view_file&file_id=EC152p14.pdf

A new 5-year plan to improve water quality

"Better Bays and Waterways" is the title of a new plan developed by Melbourne Water and the EPA to improve water quality in the Yarra, the bays and other waterways around Melbourne. Yrka and others contributed to the plan. It highlights the fact that stormwater run-off is the number one polluter, and documents the many actions being taken to manage it. The plan also contains good up-to-date data on water quality. But yrka is critical of its conclusion that the current water quality targets are too difficult and that softer interim targets are needed.

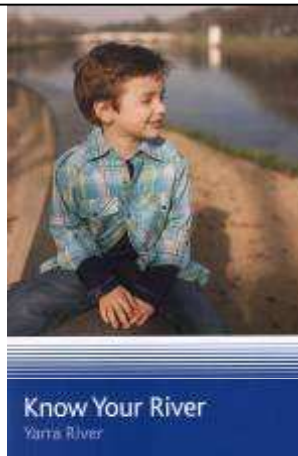


"Just in case you feel you are not making an impact"

City of Yarra councillor Alison Clarke wrote those words to us some time after taking a cruise on yrka's boat. She observed the pollution flowing out of stormwater drains and the poor state of some sections of riverbank. She then pressed fellow councillors and staff for better stormwater management and bank replanting. The council later announced a \$250,000 project to plant 40,000 plants on the bank near Burnley. Whilst there were many contributors to this outcome we are pleased to have played a part.

NEW!!! "Know Your Yarra River"

The Yarra, its history and wildlife are the subjects of an attractive new 96-page booklet recently released by Melbourne Water. We believe that reading and learning about the Yarra will encourage everyone to protect the river. So obtain your free copy by ringing 131722 or emailing inquiry@melbournewater.com.au



Join yrka today!

Yrka is a grassroots community organisation concerned with the health of the Yarra River from source to mouth. The strength of yrka depends on its membership numbers and commitment.

Please pass this bulletin on to like-minded individuals and groups, along with the yrka membership form, available at: www.yarrariver.org.au



Yrka is grateful to Melbourne Water, the EPA and the Ruffin Falkiner Trust for their grants to fund our river monitoring, community education and advocacy activities.

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