



6th March 2025

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Caring for Country - Five Mile Creek Reserve

Five Mile Creek Reserve and Creek is undoubtedly one of the most significant cultural spaces for the Wurundjeri people within Moonee Valley. It is also a valued community space for many locals in Essendon, who have the second lowest square metre of open space per capita (19m²/person) across the municipality (Open Space Strategy 2024).

We wish to draw your attention to the recent 'maintenance' works on the stormwater system at the top of the reserve which suggest that due consideration has not been given to the importance of this special place..

As you would be aware, after years of degradation, the land in this area collapsed in Spring 2024 due to excessive runoff from Pascoe Vale Road. In response, contractors were engaged to address the issue. The works undertaken comprise a concrete channel, a large chain-link fence and a pile of rocks - images are attached with a note on identified issues.

During the works, it is evident that little care was taken of our local environment:

- Trees and bushes were uprooted and left discarded.
- Other plants were damaged, left to decay, and some have died.
- Materials were left scattered on-site.
- Litter was left behind, which MVS clean-up volunteers removed.

Community members have reported the damage and debris to Council via the Snap Send Solve app and, while Officers have attended to remove fallen trees and limbs from recent storms, the detritus from the works remains.

Of greater concern for the longer term, the engineering solution has not effectively addressed the issue. The problem has merely been relocated to the flatter section of the reserve, where soil and organic debris are now being washed into the creek and washing out the footpath.

We believe that Five Mile Creek Reserve deserves better since it:

- Is one of the few immersive natural landscapes in the Moonee Valley municipality.
- Is home to the ceremonial rock circle, Babepal Paen-mirring (Mother's Tear), from which you can view this installation.
- Provides a thoroughfare for the only creek that both starts and ends within Moonee Valley, which is a tributary of Moonee Ponds Creek, part of which has been naturalized at great cost.
- Has a 10-year-old master plan that recognises this, but is severely neglected and omitted from budget rounds, despite the plan. This is very obvious when



compared to other reserves. For example, Boeing Reserve is undergoing redevelopment with the addition of a second swale to manage stormwater.

Despite its potential and significance, this reserve is currently suffering from vandalism, vegetation loss (from works, storms and vandalism) and illegal dumping of garden waste, which is causing significant deterioration to its natural beauty.

We are seeking the Council to demonstrate a deeper commitment to caring for the Country in this special place by action and investment that aligns with the principles outlined in the Five Mile Creek Reserve master plan, as well as MV2040 and the Open Space Strategy. This action and investment would also align with the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) 2030 targets, in particular [Target 12](#), to which Australia is a signatory.

Furthermore we encourage you to take an evidence-based approach to this care as outlined in Paul Boon's extensive research ([Widths of riparian corridors required to fulfil various ecological functions: a literature review, 2024](#)) which confirms that wider riparian buffers (100m+) play a critical role in maintaining the health of waterways. This includes protecting biodiversity and habitat, water quality and pollution control as well as climate resilience and carbon sequestration.

We urge the Council to please address these concerns and ensure proper restoration efforts and remediation works are undertaken to protect this valuable community and cultural space. We request that this action by Council include:

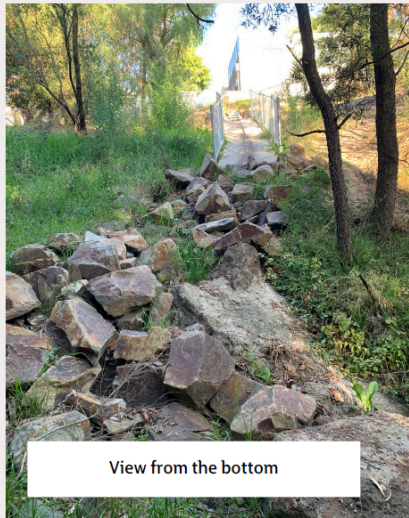
- **Engaging with representatives of the Wurundjeri people on the design of the works, going forward**
- **Revegetating the works area with local indigenous grasses, bushes and trees**
- **Working with the local young people and wider community to achieve this**
- **Re-landscaping the bottom of the storm water channel into a swale to distribute the water flow further**
- **Educating businesses and residents in the catchment about stormwater pollution and litter**
- **Collaborating with the Chain of Ponds to integrate this work with the overarching plan for the region's waterways**

Yours Sustainably,

Teresa Day signing on behalf of the MVS Committee - Logan Shield, Angela Clarke,, Valerie Thiessen, Ganga Selvarajan, Veronica Snook, Supriya Perera



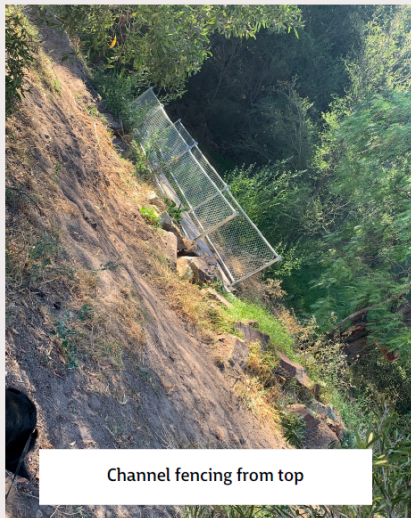
Washing out now diverted to lower ground
across footpath



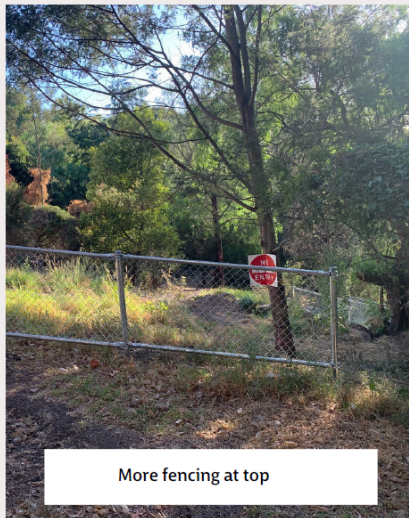
View from the bottom



Vegetation hacked and left at bottom



Channel fencing from top



More fencing at top



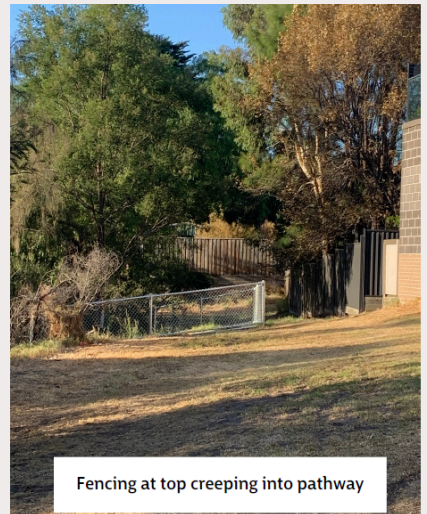
Vegetation remove and left at top



Materials left on site



Dead vegetation



Fencing at top creeping into pathway