

# Friends of Stony Creek

Presentation to the Inquiry into Recycling and  
Waste Management



Steve Wilson - President

Darren Bennetts - Secretary

Clare Sheppard - Committee Member

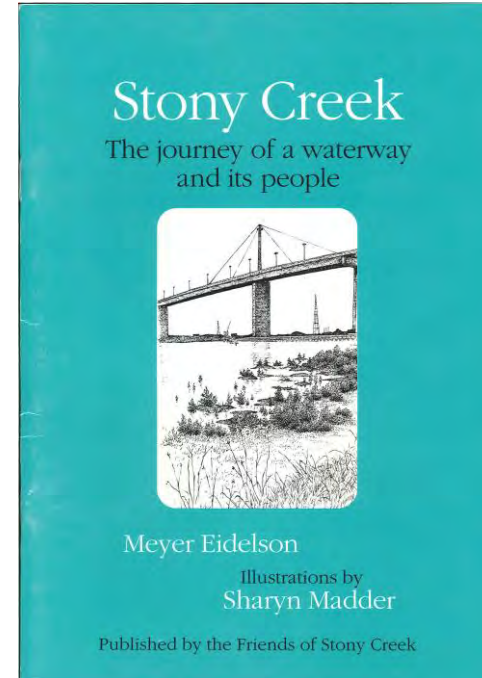
# A Voice for the Creek

- Formed in 1993
- Grassroots group of local residents
- 98 members and 937 Facebook followers



# Activities

- Conduct community plantings
- Student programs (e.g. VUT)
- Education programs with schools
- Historical walks
- Waterwatch
- Promote protection of creek and local environment

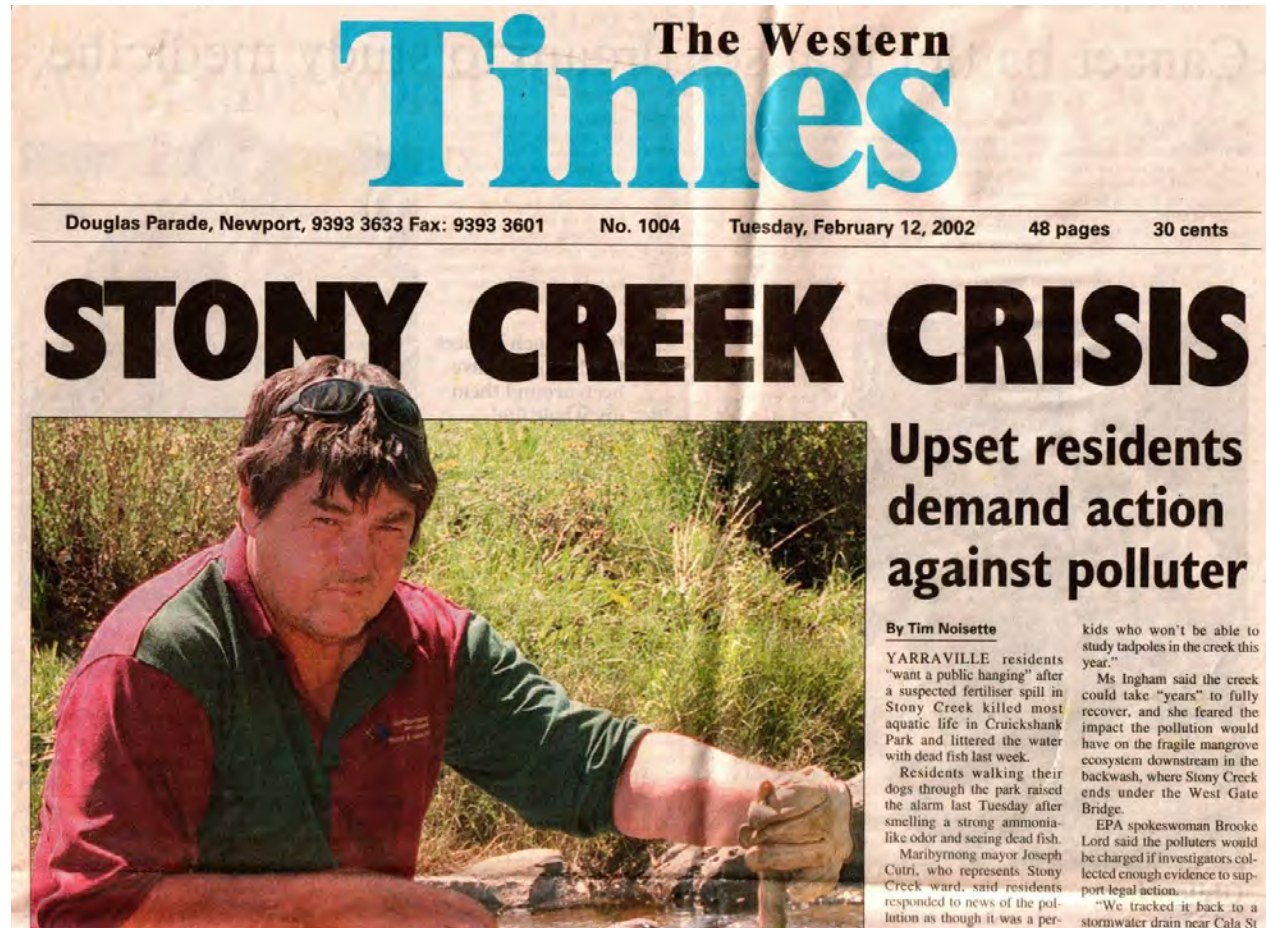


# 26 Years of Volunteering

- Have regenerated numerous locations along the creek
  - Sunshine
  - Tottenham
  - West Footscray
  - Yarraville
- Converted wasteland to once thriving refuge
- Countless volunteer hours
- Community driven restoration
- Very strong community bond



# History of Neglect



2002 - Pivot Fertilizer Spill

\$48,000 penalty

# History of Neglect

## OILY SHEEN IN STONY CREEK RESULTS IN TEXTILE COMPANY FINE

**30 Jul 2010**

A textile company in Footscray has received a \$5841 fine from EPA Victoria following an incident at its Roberts Road premises in March this year where hydraulic oil leaked into Stony Creek.

The incident came to light following reports to EPA of oily scum in a section of the creek near Somerville Road, Yarraville. Investigating EPA officers observed an oily sheen on the surface of the water and a faint hydraulic oil odour.

# History of Neglect



April 2013 Foam

No penalty

# History of Neglect



January 2014 - Transmission Oil  
No penalty?



# History of Neglect



January 2014  
No penalty?

# History of Neglect



January 2015 - Coolant  
No action/penalty?

# History of Neglect



October 2015 - Sludge/Cement?  
No action/penalty?

# History of Neglect



October 2015 - Sludge/Cement?  
No action/penalty?

# Before the Fire

- Frogs
- Fish
- Eels
- Yabbies
- Birdlife



# The Event



# Our Creek Decimated

- 5km of creek from fire site to Yarra River impacted
- Literal sterilisation below high water mark
  - Hydrocarbons
  - Solvents (e.g. acetone)
  - PFAS
  - Herbicides (2,4-D)
- Contaminated sediments



# Environmental Impacts

- Odour persisted until end of 2018 (four months)
- 2300 fish and eels
- Dead and distressed birds





# Environmental Impacts

- Tree deaths along creek
- Contaminated plume discharged into Yarra River and Port Philip Bay



# Environmental Impacts



Near the fire site, October 2018, approx. 6 week after event

# Insult to Injury



Cup Day, 6 November 2018, 2 months after the fire - Cala Street, West Footscray

# Insult to Injury



Cup Day, 6 November 2018, 2 months after the fire - Park Avenue, West Footscray

# Insult to Injury



Cup Day, 6 November 2018, 2 months after the fire - Park Avenue, West Footscray

# Insult to Injury



Cup Day, 6 November 2018, 2 months after the fire -Cruickshank Park, Yarraville

# Insult to Injury



Cup Day, 6 November 2018, 2 months after the fire -Hyde St Reserve, Yarraville

# Insult to Injury



Cup Day, 6 November 2018, 2 months after the fire



# Pattern of Neglect Continues



12 April 2019 - Source unknown

# Summary

- Long-history of neglect and often inaction
- Our worst fears have been realized
- We have had to fight hard to be heard
- Our creek has literally died
- We have too suffered:
  - Anxiety
  - Stress
  - Helplessness
  - Fear of inaction/abandonment
  - Constant reminders, compounding

# Summary

- We are concerned about the regulatory regime that lead to toxic waste being illegally stockpiled.
- We are concerned that the culture of local industry and business is one of neglect and apparent disregard.
- We are concerned that the authorities are not appropriately resourced to handle these risks

# Summary

- We fear being abandoned
  - Only \$1M officially committed by Government so far
- We fear it happening again to us or another waterway if sweeping generational change does not occur
  - This inquiry is pivotal to achieving that change
- This is not an isolated event or risk

# Summary

- Strong leadership needed
- Long-term commitments must be made
  - Rehabilitation
  - Prevention (e.g. planning, education)
  - Compliance and enforcement
  - Appropriate resources (e.g. Officers for the Protection of the Local Environment)
  - Waste tracking and auditing
- The community wants to work with the Government to bring about change

