

To PICS Committee 5 Feb 2023

In the last 6 months, several alarming issues have arisen at Scenic Estate Reserve:

1. **Damage to Moonah woodland - New BMX bike tracks:**

- In early December, Jan F and John A spotted some teenage kids on bikes carrying spades coming out of the Moonah woodland in the NW corner of the reserve. Further investigation led to the discovery of extensive excavations of dirt around the base of Moonahs for a BMX track at the end of the old bike track there. They spoke to the kids to warn them off and John put branches down over the mounds and a sign to try to prevent further damage. They notified Dave Martin and asked him to take a look, which he did with Jan Fleming (FOSER Coordinator). Dave said he would follow it up but nothing has been done as yet. We are concerned that this level of disturbance could kill the Moonahs as their roots are left exposed and the bare soil is now more likely to be eroded by wind and rain.
- See photos of damage below:



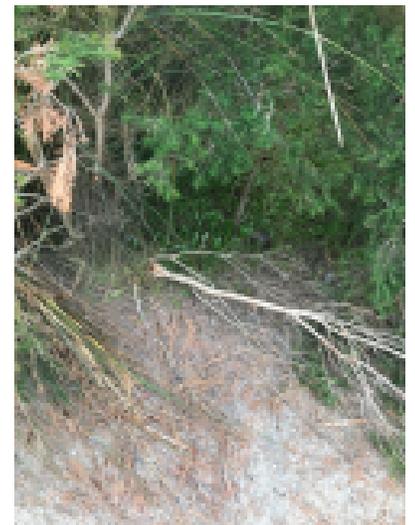
2. Damage to vegetation:

- After their morning walk on Sunday 1 January, Jan F and John A were dismayed to see the widespread 'illegal hacking' of previously healthy vegetation along LHS of the entrance path from the carpark, along the first two paths running east/ west, the path running north on western side and the path alongside the wetland. Branches had been carelessly snapped off and the resultant debris has not been taken away - it looks unsightly and the plants will be more susceptible to disease due to broken branches. This must have occurred on Saturday 31 December - New Year's Eve..
- This appears to be either wilful vandalism by a member of the public or unsupervised 'pruning' by Council contractors perhaps?
- The damage can be clearly seen in the recent photos taken on 25 January, now that the cut/damaged vegetation has died off. Also, Jan Fleming (FOSER Coordinator) has reported that some dog owners are not bothering to pick up their dogs' waste amongst the debris. (Reference REQ2022-070017).

The unsightly damage to shrubs and grasses with debris strewn along LHS of main entrance track from car park, as seen in photos, has since been cleared up by FOSEK Volunteers as part of our weed control working bee on Sunday 5 February.



Eight photos of the extensive damage along edge of three of the paths running east/west





Right: Slashed native grasses along the path next to wetland



Far Right: One example of many places where dog waste has been left on side of path.



- PICS emailed Dave Martin on 17 Jan to report this damage and request some explanation and follow up.

Dave's reply to PICS:

"I asked if the depot had done the cutting of tracks and their answer was no. I don't know who did the works, strange. We had another incident where the sides of tracks were sprayed, and again they said it wasn't them, so I do not know what is going on. Sorry".

Regards, David Martin (Natural Resources Officer)

- Then PICS asked Dave if he had spoken with Nature Parks - Stuart Murphy or Brandan? Dave Martin's reply - *'No, haven't spoken to them. I will give it a go'.*
- PICS then contacted Stuart Murphy (PINP Ranger) on this issue - he suggested the damage may have been caused by the electricity company AUSNET bringing vehicles into the reserve to service the power lines which run through the reserve? Would the power company have done this work on New Year's Eve day, and if so, would they have needed to contact council to gain access through the locked main gate into the reserve?

3. Ongoing dog waste situation at the reserve (Reference Number: REQ2022-070019)

- PICS emailed Mitch Fievez, Community Safety Officer, on 27 January 2023 for follow up info on the monitoring of dog walkers re disposal of dog waste that was to be carried out by him and other Council officers since they were notified of the issue in September 2022.
- **Mitch's email** stated that Council has carried out 4.5 hours of patrols of SER, and recorded one off-leash offence and two failure-to-carry poo bags offences.

Mitch spoke to a man carrying bread bags matching the ones that have been illegally dumped at SER and advised him that Council are currently investigating this and to ensure he uses the waste bins as infringement notices will be issued if detected not complying with this.

See photo right of 18 of the 24 bags of dog poo collected by Carmen Bush in September on the RHS of the first LH track - photo shows types of bags used (many are bread bags) and varying size of contents.



Mitch said, “Unfortunately we’ve been short-staffed this summer and have had to prioritise our work loads to account for this which has impacted my ability to patrol SER.

The new area officer ‘Molly Watchorn’ will continue the patrols based on her availability and will request that she continues to log relevant stats”.

New reference number for dog waste issue : REQ2022-069307