

Moggill Creek Catchment Group Official Opening of the Old Gold Creek Sawmill Forest Walk, Speech notes: [Ms Elizabeth Watson-Brown MP](#)
04/03/2023

Good morning. It's so lovely to see so many here! Thanks so much Sandy Pollock (MCCG Chairperson) and Gordon Grigg (Sawmill Walk founder) for your work, for your words, and for inviting me to this important event. I'm so thrilled we're finally here together after a few false starts! Which were my fault - Mea Culpa – my Covid delayed one, and being called back to Canberra before Christmas the next one, so thanks so much for your patience and persistence as here we are finally and I'm so happy to be here at this Grand Opening of the Old Gold Creek Sawmill Forest Walk.

Firstly I would like to acknowledge that we meet on the lands of the Jagera and Turrbal people. In the location of important pathways and meeting places. I acknowledge their elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge the deep wounds to their lands and their culture. I acknowledge that these wounds need healing, and I believe that the work you do, in caring for country is an important part of that healing, and is indeed an act of practical reconciliation.

Some of the history of the first people here, largely erased, is reflected in local place names. Moggill comes from 'Magir' meaning water dragon and Bellbowrie means 'place of flowering gums'. Very beautiful! Pullenvale derives from Pullen Pullen tournament grounds. Mt Coot-tha- Honey mountain. I feel that when we understand our place ..the balance of it before intervention...as a model of future balance. .we can progress towards healing, social and environmental...

A distinguishing feature of the western suburbs, really of the whole area I now think of as Ryan, was its many ceremonial sites: over 14 boras (earthen rings used for initiation), dance circles and pullen-pullen (the tournament grounds, where initiates were tested).

Why so many?

These western suburbs cover the hilly mid-section of the Brisbane River/Meanjin valley, well-watered by creeks, gullies, and waterholes. This region had many micro-environments and ecotones—areas where different environments meet. This diversity meant more, and greater variety, of animals and plants. The original people of this place considered this spiritually significant. They honoured such areas with ritual ceremonies, to celebrate, Maintain and increase the natural abundance.

Just to give a picture of this abundance, the original environments here included vine forest patches. Apart from wallabies and pademelons, these 'scrubs' offered a broad harvest of fruits like lilly-pilly, native quince, figs, nuts like macadamia, lots of black bean, native mice (bush rats), scrub turkeys, bird eggs, pigeons, ducks, parrots, fibres and adhesives like hoop pine sap. Further resources were provided by the open woodlands, where wallaby, possum, goanna, kangaroo, carpet snake, bandicoot and useful timbers were harvested, especially ironbark.

Today we particularly acknowledge the vision and hard work of Gordon Grigg. Gordon Grigg (who lives next door to where the Gold Creek Sawmill operated from 1919 to 1923) recognised the huge value of this environment, the remnant Dry Rainforest and Vine Scrub which retains many of the original common species that used to be prevalent in the Moggill Creek. The amazing range of trees, some of considerable size. So deep thanks and congratulations to Gordon and everyone involved in Moggill Creek Catchment Group for your remarkable achievement here... which I know takes so much effort, so many human hours from tireless volunteers healing and looking after this place for future generations.

Thanks to you, 100 species have been identified and 200 of both saplings and mature specimens labelled. You've made the area accessible - weeding, clearing, nurturing mature trees and regrowth

and planting more. And discovering new growth including a beautiful [now identified] fern that cropped up. This is so inspiring and a great example for other groups.

I know the funding came from the previous Federal Government's Community Environment Program, a good healthy sum of around \$10,000 which you have spent wisely on employing weeding contractors to clear the severely overgrown site to a stage where it was manageable by your bushcare volunteers, and for the purchase of about 100 permanent labels. Trackwork has continued through covid and other setbacks, and the labelling of 86 trees was completed with that funding. Subsequently another 90 or so trees have been labelled and the track has been improved and extended, and is maintained by a dedicated group of MCCG members.

I am so very impressed and grateful. What you have achieved is momentous. This resource is so valuable, so useful. A reference collection for anyone here and beyond who loves or is interested in the environment and trees.

Thank you from me, thank you from the community, thank you from the environment, and thank you from the future custodians of this place...all the children and grandchildren.

I'll just conclude with that famous quote from Nelson Henderson "The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit."