

MEREDITH'S MESSAGE TO COUNCIL 15th FEBRUARY 2021

AN AESTHETIC OVERLAY FOR COUNCILS' ARBORETUM PLAN

1.CONTEXT

My name is Meredith Forster. In 1971 I graduated from Sydney University with a Bachelor of Arts including Fine Arts and Geography. I have been a portrait artist for 45 years, with clients in New Zealand and the United States.

My passion for the Kananook Creek started 73 years ago, visiting my grandparents there. My husband and I built our house and studios with our own hands on the bank of the Kananook. What a great view! Seaford is special.

2.OUR VISION

Since 1976 I have been involved in protecting and enhancing the **Kananook Creek** Environment, following in my father's footsteps. Fifty-one years, with Ivan Blake, I pioneered this important work, founding the Kananook Creek Association, when the Dandenong Valley Authority was planning to turn it into a barrel drain. I mean, really? Hard as it is to believe, that was the first of several unacceptable, unnatural attempts at managing this beautiful, serene feature of our environment, as precious as the beach.

This galvanized our local membership, growing to 450, and we campaign consistently, holding our vision. As Secretary, and then President, I also spearheaded the Publicity Sub-Committee. What better way to involve the wider community in – "Caring for Kananook" - than a festival on the creek and its banks. It was our contribution to Victoria's 150th Anniversary Celebrations in 1985, and it was so popular, we continued running it for years. Each time with a different creative theme. It was unique to Seaford involving schools, local clubs and societies like Scouts, Lions, Canoe Club and shop owners. We put Seaford on the map, when it was being overlooked by authorities.

You know that Seaford residents rallied to save our pier from being demolished in the Kennett years, we are proud of our natural heritage too and want only to see **Seaford's assets become inspirational not wasted**.

3.CREATING MAGICAL SPACES

Jill Orr-Young's comprehensive survey of the Creekside vegetation instigated Kananook Creek Association's 1979 plea to the then Minister for Water Supply to set our vision for its restoration. We still want her valuable 'magical spaces' established for us and our descendants. I really love Frankston's George Pentland Botanic Gardens at Foote Street with its banksia design gate and the wooden sculptures on the fern walk. Wondrous installations already grace Seaford beach (the whale) and the foreshore (sea captain's memorial).

Now we need a unique metal marker for the entrance to the new Botanic Garden, maybe a platypus (witnessed in Kananook Creek 65 year ago) or an echidna (seen recently). It needn't cost a lot to be both indestructibly practical and beautiful (like our house).