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**DRAFT MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tanti Creek Friends secure funding for fish survey**

Local community group, Tanti Creek Friends have commenced a fish survey at Tanti Creek, Mornington following concerns that fish numbers and diversity have decreased significantly in the last two years.

Marty Lenard, Coordinator of Tanti Creek Friends said it's been twenty years since a comprehensive survey of this type has been undertaken on the much-loved creek.

"The survey when complete will provide the community with baseline data against which results of previous surveys and future remedial action can be measured.

"Rapid urban development in the creek catchment has resulted in increased flows from stormwater drains and debris from eroding creek banks. This poses a direct threat to creek aquatic life through the decrease in water quality and smothering of creek bed habitats by sediment Mr Lenard said.

"The survey will cover the entire length of Tanti Creek and will involve setting of bait traps and electrofishing, water quality data reviews, an assessment of erosion impacts and the identification of fish barriers."

The survey is being funded by Australian Unity's Healthcare Property Trust the owner of the Beleura Private Hospital with the support of Ramsay Healthcare the hospital's operator and the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

Peter Beale, Senior Asset Manager at Australian Unity said the Beleura Private Hospital enjoys over 250 metres of attractive creek frontage which is about 10% of its total length. Supporting the community with research like this was important to assist Tanti Creek Friends and the local community better understand what additional action can be taken to support the creek's health.

Michelle Henderson, CEO of the Beleura Private Hospital with Ramsay Healthcare observed that the creek provides many rooms in the hospital with a relaxing semi-rural outlook and the grounds near the creek are used by staff and patients as a rest and exercise area. "We are very fortunate to have such a beautiful setting for the hospital" she said.

The study is being conducted by Streamline Research and will be completed by the end of March. Results of the survey will be made available on the Tanti Creek Friends website.

**Ends**

Tanti Creek Friends (TCF) is a volunteer group dedicated to preserving and enhancing Tanti Creek for the benefit of its flora, fauna and aquatic life, and the amenity of the Mornington community. Working bees are held on the last Tuesday of each month. For further information contact Marty Lenard on 0427888712 or visit <http://morningtonenviro.org.au/> and click on the Friends Group tab.