



● BLACKBURN residents on their "Awareness Walk" through the creek area which they believe should be saved.

Walking, working to save creek area

By TIMOTHY WOOD

BLACKBURN residents, fighting to save creek land between Pakenham and Main Sts., boosted the cause with a tree-planting work bee at the weekend.

This follows an "Awareness Walk" by 200 residents in a bid to show Nunawading Council and the MMBW the value of the land, not only to Blackburn but to Melbourne and its people.

The area has more than 165 species of birds, including rosellas and bellbirds, and is used by bird-watchers, photographers, artists and joggers.

The battle to save the 24 ha site has been going on for a year.

The MMBW compulsorily acquired it from 1955 to 1973.

Following Government direction that the MMBW sell off surplus assets, the site was offered to Nunawading Council.

But the offer was declined because of the price and maintenance costs.

Options open to the MMBW

now are to rezone the land, probably as residential, or sell it to the adjoining owners.

The Blackburn Creek Conservation Group is directly opposed to any residential development of the area.

It fears that barrel-draining of the creek and cluster housing development would follow.

A spokesman, Graham Burgess, said that land under

similar threat had been saved in Maribyrnong, Doncaster and Sunshine recently because of government action.

"The area under threat, apart from being beautiful, provides a valuable walk way to schools, railway stations, shops and sports grounds," he said.

"Indeed, the area is part of a whole linear bushland park, which has the advantage of being far more accessible than a block-shape park."

An MMBW spokesman said it has no immediate plans for the land and that any change would have to be exhibited for three months for public comment.

Future use of the land would have to consider flood levels and creek access, he said.