



MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2014

Volume 100

Western Land Services



"Western Land Services are specialists in environmental management techniques, weed & vermin control."

Champion Agribusiness at the Victorian Small Business Champion Awards for 2007 & 2008 & 2007 Melton Business Excellence award, 2009 Powercor Melton Business Excellence Awards & 2009 Apprentice of the Year award.

MEG ONLINE

Website: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au/>;

Facebook: check for coming MEG events;
[:http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Melton-Australia/Melton-Environment-Group/139259387879](http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Melton-Australia/Melton-Environment-Group/139259387879);

Nature out West is a blog created by MEG to highlight the beauty & diversity of Melton's flora & fauna, as well as its more spectacular landscape.
<http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/>;

NEXT MEG MEETING

MEG's next meeting will be Wednesday 17th September.

MEG meetings are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, at 7:30, at Don Nardella's office in Alexandra St (beside Ambulance Station).

WILDLIFE RESCUE

Ring: 13 000 94535

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS 2014

KABV Sustainable Cities Awards

Once again Melton has figured prominently in this year's Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria (KABV) Sustainability Cities Awards. No less than four award came to Melton! MC Libbi Gorr (self-confessed 'It' girl of the eighties!) hosted the evening with style & wit



Protection of the Environment:

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group & Western Water 'A Gorgeous Outdoor Classroom on the Werribee River'

This award recognises the work done by an effective working partnership between Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group (PLEG) & Western Water. It demonstrates what can be achieved by an environmental group working with a public utility, in close partnership to achieve a common goal.

Winner of Melton Shire's 2009 Community Achievement Award: Arnolds Creek Biolink

Winner of KABV / Sustainable Cities Award 2013: Protection of the Environment: Arnolds Creek Biolink



Category Winner

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria
Sustainable Cities Awards 2013

sustainability.vic.gov.au/KABV



PLEG & Western Water with KABV Award

PLEG & Western Water were last awarded the Protection of the Environment award in 2010 "The White-breasted Sea-eagle has landed".



Protection of the Environment Award

No less than 18 KABV awards have come to Melton over the last few years. Last year three awards came to Melton. These are listed on the Melton Council website:

http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Services/Environment_and_sustainability/Environmental_awards;

These awards, over several years, are living proof that it is possible for one of the fastest growing regions to remain environmentally responsible.

Melton has demonstrated its level of commitment concerning the protection of our natural treasures, such as Werribee River Volcanic Gorge, & several remnant woodlands. They also serve to remind us that we cannot afford to drop the baton of responsibility as there will be unprecedented urban development & growth over the coming decades.

Active Schools Award: Toolern Vale & District Primary School 'Bird watching, gardens & cooking make our school special' This was an innovative environmental science program to increase awareness of birds & their environment, in collaboration with Birdlife Australia's 'Birds in Backyards', Melton Council & Melbourne Water.



Toolern Vale Primary School with Award

Cultural Heritage:
Melton Family History Group Revealing & celebrating our Community History



Since 1995 the Melton Family History Group has assisted the community in Melton to research local & family history.

President: Daryl Akers
Secretary: Doug Godsil
Meetings:

Phone: 0438 277 252
Environmental Advisor: Peter Sell
3rd Wednesday of the month at Don Nardella's office in Alexandra St (beside Ambulance Station) at 7:30

email: darylakers@gmail.com
Website: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au/>

**Environmental Sustainability Award:
Melton City Council Green Stars Shine at the
Melton Library**

The Melton Library & Learning Hub was the first library in Australia to achieve a 5 Star Green Public Building Design PILOT rating when it opened in June 2013



Melton Councillors with KABV award

**Wyndham Community Volunteer Awards
Frances Overmars: Environment &
Sustainability Award**



Rudi & Frances Overmars at presentation evening

On Friday 22nd August PLEG's Frances Overmars was awarded Wyndham City's Environment & Sustainability Award at a gala presentation evening, yet again demonstrating the hard work done by people in this region in protection our natural environment.

'Frances has dedicated over 30 years to protecting & enhancing Wyndham City's biodiversity through on-ground work, provision of advice, & facilitation of community events, groups & educational resources. In particular, she is a very active member of the Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group.'

MEG EVENTS IN AUGUST

Bird Walk at Brookfield



On Saturday 23rd August 11 people participated in a bird walk beside Arnolds Creek at Brookfield, hosted by MEG, including Flo, Geraldine, Brian, Nora & Daryl of MEG, visitors June, Ruby, Surong, James & John, & Ros (manager at Brookfield Lifestyle Village). It was a beautiful warm sunny morning & Brookfield was literally alive with birds! We saw a total of 25 bird species. A good total for the middle of Melton!

These included:

New Holland Honeyeater	Red Wattlebird
White-plumed Honeyeater	Welcome Swallows
Fairy Martins	Magpie
Little Raven	Mudlark
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Willy Wagtail
Blackbird	House Sparrow
Starling	Mynah
Red-rumped Parrot	Eastern Rosella
Rainbow Lorikeet	Black Duck
Wood Duck	Purple Swamphen
Crested Pigeon	Turtledove
Domestic Pigeon	Black-shouldered Kite
Chickens (free range along creekside reserve!)	

The ducks were reluctant to leave at our approach & continued investigating the large Red Gums. In the same Red Gum, Little Ravens were nesting at the top while a pair of Mudlarks were constructing a nest on a lower branch. The Mudlarks were collecting mud from the creek to build the nest. In

this one tree there were Black Ducks, Wood Ducks, Little Ravens, Mudlarks, Rainbow Lorikeets & White-plumed Honeyeaters. The majority of birds were seen between Black Dog Drive & the Brookfield laneway, in the area MEG has been restoring! Fairy Martins were a new species for this site.

COMING MEG EVENTS

Monday 1st September

planting at Brookfield,

Tuesday 2nd September,

planting at Brookfield with CVA

Bunnings Spring Launch

Saturday 13th September.

MEG will participate in Bunnings Spring Launch again this year. Brookfield Village resident's landcare group will also be participating. The Brookfield residents are now active participants in the environmental restoration of Arnolds Creek.

Planting with Melton Christian College

Wednesday 17th September

MEG will be planting with students from Melton Christian College. We will be planting in the three 'islands' that we created back in 2007, replacing understory plants that have died over the past few years.

Bird & Wildflower Walk: Melton Gilgai

Saturday 20th September 9.00 – 11.00

Note. not 13th September as advised earlier

71 bird species have been observed here to date. The site is flat & people-friendly. We should see some of the 100 or so kangaroos that have their home here. Meet in Harkness Road. Head west all the way through Melton along High Street, into the old highway to Bacchus Marsh. Turn right (north) into Harkness Rd, (just before descending into Anthony's Cutting). The woodland is in *Harkness Road Melway 330 Ref B11*

Bird Walk at Melton Botanic Garden

Friday 24th October Part of Bird Week activities

Eynesbury Forest Bird Walk

Sunday 26th October Part of Bird Week activities

Long Forest Mallee

Sunday 9th November 9.00 – 11.00

On Sunday 9th October Melton Environment Group

will host a bird walk in Long Forest Mallee LFM. *Long Forest Road Melway 335 Ref E3*

Blackwood: BBQ & picnic

Sunday 7th December

MEG will have our end of year BBQ & picnic at Blackwood this year on Sunday 7th December. Sausages & bread supplied by MEG. Meet at Blackwood Hotel corner at 10.00. BYO salads & dessert. Please advise of special dietary requirements. We will have our customary walk.

BIRD WEEK

Bird Week in Melton

20th – 26th October

MEG will be conducting bird awareness activities during Bird Week, funded by City of Melton's Environment Day grant. Every October, BirdLife Australia organises and promotes Bird Week with the goal of inspiring Australians to take action and get involved in bird conservation efforts. As people become more aware of our local birdlife & wildlife this will also hopefully create a desire to protect it. <http://birdlife.org.au/get-involved/whats-on/bird-week>;

MEG activities in Bird Week will include:

Bird display at Melton Information Centre

MEG will have a bird awareness display in the Melton Information Centre over Bird Week

Bird Walk & Bird Awareness at Melton Botanic

Garden Friday 24th October 10.00

Meet at the Depot in William Street. Nora Peters will give a presentation on Melton birds

Bird Presentation & Walk at Eynesbury

Sunday 26th October 9.00 – 11.00

Meet in the carpark beside the Discovery Centre. Melway 226 Ref H2 (or just follow the large roadside signs to Eynesbury)

Other MEG activities in Bird Week:

- Education about local rare & endangered birds
- Information on local birds in digital format
- Education about local birds & wildlife
- Why our environment is important
- Birdlife & wildlife requirements
- Information about nestboxes
- Why old trees are important
- Bird watching in Melton
- Plants to attract birds

- Guest speakers

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

Environmental Group at Kurunjang Secondary College: Melbourne Water Conference: July 31st to August 1st, 2014

Lucy Cassar, Student Connectedness & Environmental Coordinator, Kurunjang Secondary College, describes the Environmental Group at Kurunjang Secondary College participation in 'Melbourne Water Kids Teaching Kids Conference'

'Day 1

Our excursion began at Melton Station at 7:30 am on Thursday, 31 July, 2014. We were heading to Etihad Stadium for the 'Melbourne Water Kids Teaching Kids Conference'. Registration kicked off at 8:15 am where we received our hoodies, hats and drink bottles, and we were then directed into our presentation room; which was in the 'Fitzroy/Brisbane Bears' member's room. After setting up, we headed down to the Victory Room for the welcome ceremony where we watched Mitch Firth, an international didgeridoo player and Indigenous dancer. The MC for the conference was Mike Larkin, the weatherman from Channel 10!

We then set off into our rooms for our first lesson. During the first workshop called 'Where have all the animals gone?', we had sixteen schools in two groups learn how recycling can save the animals in our environment. The presentation was conducted by Tianna Taylor (7C), Layla Saglam (7C), Kayla Darcy (7B), Cheyenne Arthur-Beadle (7B) and Taililino Ruebeck (7B). All girls did an excellent job and highly impressed the organizers.

After lunch we were split up into groups and went and viewed different schools delivering their lessons. They were very informative and did a good job.

At 6:30pm we were back in the 'Victory Room' for our Conference Gala Dinner and Dance. The kids had a great time interacting with other school kids. At 8:30 pm the night concluded and we were back into our accommodation.

Day 2

We had breakfast at 7:30am. We boarded the bus at 8:00 am and headed off to Collingwood Children's Farm for a day of activities provided by Melbourne Water. The students really enjoyed

participating in a range of activities. In the afternoon we walked to Victoria Park railway station and caught public transport home.

We would like to acknowledge the support of the Victorian Association for Environmental Education who sponsored the trip, Melbourne Water and Kids Teaching Kids for providing Kurunjang Secondary College with the opportunity to become the first Melton school to attend and present at this conference.

Dr Lucy Cassar, Student Connectedness & Environmental Coordinator, Biology, Science & Maths Teacher, Kurunjang Secondary College; & Ms Leanne Sinclair

Environmental Water Flows

Bill Moulden, of Melbourne Water, writes:

'Beginning this morning, [8th August] water will be released from Merrimu Reservoir to improve the ecology of Coimadai Creek in the Long Forest Nature Reserve near Bacchus Marsh. Approximately 2 million litres per day will be released on an ongoing basis through winter and spring to provide habitat for macro invertebrates and frogs. We will constantly monitor the flow and ecology of the creek over the coming months so that we can measure and maximise the environmental benefits of this water release. The creek is currently not flowing due to a drier and warmer than normal season in the Werribee catchment and this release will be the first sustained flow of 2014. The water level will rise by 10-20 cm in most sections of the creek.

The release is a partnership between Melbourne Water, Southern Rural Water and the Victorian Environmental Water Holder. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions and pass the information on to others who may be interested.'

Bill Moulden, Melbourne Water,

PLEG planting in Werribee River escarpment

On Sunday 10th August Frances, Irene, Simon & Daryl of Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group, (PLEG) & a visitor, Alex, planted 250 plants on the escarpment overlooking the Werribee River Volcanic Gorge. We planted 200 Redleg Grasses & 50 Wahlenbergias (Native Bluebell). This planting is part of the Werribee River Volcanic Gorge Environmental Restoration Project. This project has been underway since 2008. The Volcanic Gorge here is owned by Western Water and is immediately adjacent to their treatment

plant at Surbiton Park. The restoration project covers the whole cross section of the gorge; from riverside and river flats, to the steep escarpments and up to the grassland at the top of the escarpment. Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group and Western Water recently were awarded the prestigious 'Protection of the Environment Award' by Keep Australia Beautiful (Victoria) Sustainable Cities, for environmental work done along the river here.



Birding at Pinkerton & Bush's Paddock: Ten Year Anniversary



Morning tea at Pinkerton Forest

On Sunday 17th August Birdlife Australia & Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group hosted their regular bird survey at Pinkerton Forest, Bush's Paddock & Eynesbury Forest. Eighteen people participated in the walk which celebrated ten years of bird surveys at Pinkerton Forest & Bush's Paddock! An anniversary cake was supplied with morning tea by PLEG's Frances Overmars. About 140 bird species have been recorded at Pinkerton & about 80 at Eynesbury to date. More details on Nature out West; <http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/melton-nature-out-west/>;

Dave Torr of Birdlife Australia, who led the walk, reports:

'15 birders joined Frances and Daryl from the Landcare group for our quarterly survey at Pinkerton, Bush's Paddock and Eynesbury. It was a cold and windy day and the birding was initially fairly slow, but we soon cheered up with our first sightings of Diamond Firetails at Pinkerton - a bird that has been rather scarce recently. We were to see at least 7 during the morning, and a similar number of Jacky Winters - another bird that has been dropping in numbers. The numbers of Noisy Miners unfortunately seem to be increasing, and we added Silver Gull to our Pinkerton list



Flame Robin in hiding at Bush's Paddock

'At morning tea Frances produced a cake and some old documents to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our surveys in the area. 'Bush's Paddock as usual had fewer species than Pinkerton, but we had around 10 Flame Robins on the boundary fence and at least 15 Zebra Finch. After a cold and windy lunch it was off to Eynesbury, where we failed to find any Diamond Firetails (but did see 30+ Red-browed Finches). As usual there were good numbers of Brown Treecreepers and we found at least 2 Speckled Warblers.

'The total species count for the day was a very respectable 65 - 5 more than last year'

Pinkerton Link: Westbourne Grammar School

On Wednesday 28th August there was a massive planting event at Pinkerton Link by students from Westbourne Grammar School, staff from Western Water & Western Land Services, members of PLEG, as well as several volunteers. We planted about 1,084 plants. This may well be a record for

this site. An innovation was the use of several jute mats to combat competition from weeds that grow rampantly in the highly fertile soil.



Pinkerton Link: Bacchus Marsh Girl Guides



On Sunday 31st August a group of Girl Guides from Bacchus Marsh, with their Leaders and parents participated in the Pinkerton Link Project, helping us 'grow a forest from nothing! They planted about 250 plants, including Wallaby Grass, Speargrass and four Grey Box trees. We planted in three plots situated at the northern end of the paddock. As these trees grow to maturity we expect them to provide a windbreak against the hot northerlies that blow across here in summer. This should shelter the plants downwind, protecting them from the frying influence of these winds. Also, as these plants mature and set seed, their seeds will be blown downwind into the paddock, causing natural regeneration of native plants.

COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

Time lapse photography of fungi

Melton Saturday 6th September

Linda Bradburn (Melton Environmental Educator) writes:

'Time lapse photography is a wonderful way of watching the magic of fungi. Learn how easy it is to do this at home. Join Ian Bell who has

photographed for the fungimap project at the Melbourne Herbarium.

Saturday 6th September, 11.15 am to 12.15pm,
Melton Learning and Library Hub, 232 McKenzie Street, Melton FREE! Light refreshments provided.
RSVP: Linda Bradburn (Environmental Educator)
Email: lindab@melton.vic.gov.au;
Phone: 9747 7200

Jointly presented by the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association and Melton City Council'
Linda Bradburn, Environmental Educator, Melton City Council, ph: (03) 9747 7200' fax: (03) 9743 9970: www.melton.vic.gov.au

Latham Snipe: expert discussion by David Wilson, Melton Library 10th September 7.30pm

Linda Bradburn writes:

'Listen to an expert (David Wilson) about Latham Snipe on 10th September

*Latham or Japanese Snipe is an endangered bird protected under Federal Law that has been seen over several years in the **Melton Botanic Garden**. The birds migrate every year from Japan. Please join the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden and hear an expert talk about this bird, how you can recognise it, who to report the sighting to, and what their significance is.*

David Wilson [of Ecology & Heritage Partners] is an ecologist with over 15 years' experience, specialising in ornithology and field research. David's passion for birds and birding has taken him throughout Australia, and across the world, observing and researching birds. He studied habitat use in the Southern Emu-wren as part of a Bachelor of Environmental Science degree, and then the conservation ecology of pythons on Cape York and Papua New Guinea for a PhD. He has then undertaken a range of research projects, including Great Bowerbird bower ornamentation across northern Australia and penguin population monitoring in Antarctica. David currently works as an ecological consultant, where he has assessed snipe habitat for a variety of developments, including wind farms.'

Melton Library and Learning Hub, 31 McKenzie Street, Melton 10th September 7.30pm. Free with light refreshments and free bird posters. RSVP Linda Bradburn (Environmental Educator) Email: lindab@melton.vic.gov.au; 9747 7200. Please RSVP by 6 September for catering purposes.

Linda Bradburn; *Environmental Educator; Melton City Council*; ph: (03) 9747 7200; fax: (03) 9743 9970; www.melton.vic.gov.au;

Platypus Festival

11th October 12pm to 4pm

Friends of Toolern Creek will host their 6th Platypus Festival on October 11th Toolern Creek alongside Big Red. There will be Jumping Castle, Face Painting, Animal Farm, Pony Rides, Snake Man and lots more. Contact Lyn Holdsworth, President, Friends of Toolern Creek.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Anakie Action Group Campaign Launch – ‘Hands Off Our Sisters’

Helena Lindorff of Anakie (& co-founder of MEG) writes

*“Anakie Action Group have launched a campaign called **Hands Off Our Sisters**. Aerolite Quarries Pty Ltd has lodged an application with City of Greater Geelong to build a **250-acre quarry** and blasting site at The Three Sisters, Anakie. The proposed quarry is a massive extension of the present scoria quarry operated by Aerolite on a neighbouring site.*

If approved the quarry will:

- * Be situated within 3000 metres of Anakie township*
- * Be located in the middle of a beautiful recreational, agricultural and tourism area – home of the Anakie Fairy Park, Anakie Gorge, farms, vineyards, restaurants, horse riding, camping, cycling, kangaroos and koalas.*
- * The quarry will create one of the biggest scars on the Victorian landscape west of the Yallourn open cut coal mine.*
- * Occupy 250 acres – more than 50 times the size of the playing surface at Simonds Stadium*
- * Be up to 75 metres deep after remediation – higher than Simonds Stadium and its light towers*

Please help the Anakie Residents stop this development by signing an online petition www.anakieactiongroup.org. Please pass this information onto others in the community.”

Cheers, Helena (Anakie Resident)

Caroline Springs Animal Welfare Network: Cruelty Free Guide to the West

Rana Hales of CSAWN writes:

‘The wait is over! The NEW version of our popular Cruelty Free Guide to the West is now available for download from our website www.csawn.org;

Please feel free to share on your social media pages and websites. Printed copies of the guide will be available in the coming weeks. If you would like to support our work, please consider making a donation via <http://www.gofundme.com/at04zc>; or contact us for direct deposit details. A big thank you goes out to our sponsors: Melton Council, Aspire, Independent Signs, Cruelty Free Super, Renew Vitality, Vegans Are Cool and Supreme Master Ching Hai Association.’

Rana Hales, President/ Coordinator, Caroline Springs Animal Welfare Network, P: 0410 315 808
E: csawnetwork@gmail.com; www.csawn.org; PO Box 3682 Caroline Springs 3023. Join us on [facebook](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#)

MELTON WILDLIFE

Barn Owl at Deanside



Councillor Nola Dunn recently photographed this Barn Owl in her shed. These beautiful owls are frequently seen in sheds, hence their name. Their appetite for rodents makes them very popular with farmers. In many overseas countries people often place roosting platforms & nesting boxes to attract owls to their premises. Their large eyes enable them to see at night & the round facial disc is an aid to hearing; enabling them to hunt & navigate in almost pitch darkness.



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