



MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2015

Volume 105

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Western Land Services



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

Phone 03 9747 0855 or email info@westernland.com.au;

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>;

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 February

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

JANUARY

After our third warmest year on record, a very hot beginning to 2015! Followed by thunderstorms, downpours & damaging winds. 13mm on 13th January, according to Western Water.

However, January was not nearly as hot as expected, with a few showers. No watering needed this January! Welcome to Melbourne!

MEG EVENTS IN JANUARY

Melton Energy & Sustainability Expo



Geraldine awaiting crowds at Melton Energy Expo

On Saturday 31st January Geraldine & Daryl represented MEG at Melton Council's Energy & Sustainability Expo, at Melton Library. Large numbers of people visited the expo. Many people showed interest in MEG activities, especially about birds & how to attract native birds to your garden. MEG even found a new member!

The Expo focussed on issues such as

- energy efficiency
- how to understand your energy bills
- renewable energy

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

- how to join local environmental, gardening & sustainability groups

Local community groups included:

- Australian Plants Society
- Melton Bowerbirds (Reuse & Repair)
- Friends of Melton Botanic Gardens
- Friends of Toolern Creek

Also represented were:

- Little Green Workshops (Gavin Webber)
- Enviroshop (Going off Grid)
- Solar Sunwerx

Special guests included Vasili Kanidiadis of media & nursery fame & Alan Pears who explained energy bills & how to best choose energy saving domestic appliances.



Vasili & Alan Pears answering questions at Expo

COMING MEG EVENTS

Birdwalk Saturday 28th February
Caroline Springs

Cleanup Australia Day 25th anniversary
Brookfield, Sunday, 1st March.

MEG will once more be participating in Clean Up Australia Day this year. BBQ afterward at Hannah Watts Park. We will be cleaning up at our planting site at Brookfield. Meet at Arnolds Creek in Black Dog Drive (near the Black Dog Drive bridge) just west of the roundabout at the corner of Coburns Road & Black Dog Drive. There is a small kindergarten carpark here & access is very easy. The site is very child friendly. Melways Map 336 Ref G11. Details on:

<http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/>;

National Tree Day

Brookfield Sunday July 26th.

Planting Red Gums in Clarkes Road wetland
TBA

Planting at Melton Christian College
Wildflowers beside MCC carpark TBA

Planting beside Church of Latterday Saints
Tree planting at Arnolds Creek at High Street. The large pile of sludge removed from Arnolds Creek in 2014 has been removed. MEG will be planting here in the weedless space that has been left.
TBA

Bird Week in Melton: October

MEG will be hosting Bird Week in Melton once again in October.

BIRDWATCHING IN MELTON 2015

MEG birdwatching events will commence in February. All MEG walks are easy walking & child friendly, on defined paths. Other dates & venues TBA

Saturday 28th February 9.00 – 11.00
Caroline Springs

MEG Bird Group will host its first bird walk for 2015 at Caroline Springs wetland on Saturday 28th February. Last year we saw 32 bird species, in two hours, in a site totally surrounded by suburbia. Most water birds are quite tame, reflecting the large numbers of walkers & joggers along the creekside tracks.

Meet in the carpark behind the medical centre beside the large lake at the entrance at Caroline Springs BLVD. Melway 358 Ref G4

Sunday 29th March 9.00 – 11.00
Little Blind Creek

Little Blind Creek flows through Melton, meeting Toolern Creek at Hannah watts Park. It is home for large numbers of birds. The many old hollow trees provide nest sites for many hollow-nesting birds & possums. Meet in Guide Hall carpark in Pinkerton St (off Yuille St opposite Melton Golf Course). Melway Map 337 Ref C8

Saturday 25th April**Toolern Creek: Big Red**

There is a footpath that runs along the creek. The creek forms a corridor for birds & other wildlife through Melton, from Toolern Vale in the north to the Toolern Regional Park in the south, thence to the Werribee River

Sunday 24th May**Arnolds Creek: Brookfield**

This is MEG's primary environmental revegetation site.

Other proposed Bird Watching venues

Hannah Watts Park
Toolern Regional Park
Strathtullock Woodland
Melton Gilgai Woodland
Eynesbury Forest
Long Forest Mallee

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS**Birding at Pinkerton & Eynesbury Forest****Sunday 15th February**

Birdlife Australia & PLEG invite the community to join them birding at Pinkerton Forest, Bush's Paddock &, Eynesbury Forest.

Toilets & coffee shop at Eynesbury (composting toilet at Pinkerton). These sites are not usually open to the public & are home to a large variety of woodland birds. About 140 bird species have been recorded at Pinkerton & about 90 at Eynesbury to date. For more info: Dave Torr: 9749 5141 or davidtorr@gmail.com; Mob 0458 035 896 (BLA), www.birdlife.org.au/events; Melway Map 221 ref H8 Gates open 9.15am, walk starts 9.30

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**Melton Cemetery Woodland**

Within Melton's proposed new cemetery (between Harkness & Bulmans road north of Melton) there is a small remnant Grey Box Grassy Woodland. The proposed new cemetery also surrounds Melton Gilgai Woodland in Harkness Road on two sides, protecting it from urban encroachment. The remnant woodland is near the start of Arnolds Creek. Melton Gilgai Woodland & the cemetery woodland form valuable links in a wildlife corridor along Arnolds Creek. The Grey Box trees are several centuries old, with numerous large hollows, forming valuable wildlife habitat



New fence around Cemetery Woodland



Dusky Woodswallow nesting in remnant woodland

This Dusky Woodswallow was observed nesting in the small woodland remnant in January. It was feeding an Ant Lion to its young in its nest behind a flaking piece of bark. The Dusky Woodswallow is a migratory bird that returns to Melton each year in the warmer months to nest & rear its young

The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust has recently placed a fence around the woodland remnant. This fence should ensure that the woodland remnant is protected from grazing if livestock is placed in the surrounding cemetery grounds to reduce the danger of grass fire. Congratulations to Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust for acting to protect the biodiversity of this valuable woodland remnant.

2014: warmest year on record!

According to NASA:

'2014 was the warmest year on record, with global temperatures 0.68C (1.24F) above the long-term average, US government scientists have said.

The results mean that 14 of the 15 warmest years on record have occurred since the turn of the century. The [analysis was published on Friday](#) by Nasa and NOAA researchers.

Last month, the World Meteorological Organization released provisional figures that predicted the past 12 months were set to be record breakers.

The long-term global average temperature is calculated from data collected between 1951 and 1980.

"This is the latest in a series of warm years, in a series of warm decades," said Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies'

www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-30852588;

2014 Australia's third hottest year

Sydney Morning Herald: Tuesday 6th Jan 2015

'The past two years have been the hottest on record for parts of the country with NSW and Victoria experiencing the warmest average temperatures in 2014 according to the Bureau of Meteorology.'

'Australia has capped two years of extraordinary warmth with 2014 declared the third hottest on record just 12 months after 2013 smashed annual highs, the Bureau of Meteorology said.'

'No year since 1985 has observed a below-average global mean temperature and all of the 10 warmest years have occurred between 1998 and the present.'

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/weather/weat-her-2014-australias-third-hottest-year-on-record-20150106-12ignf.html>;

2014 was Australia's third-warmest year: BoM ABC Rural: 6th January 2015

'The Bureau of Meteorology has confirmed that 2014 was Australia's third-warmest year since national records began in 1910.

Australian maximum and minimum temperatures remained well above average for most of 2014.

February was the only month that recorded below average temperatures.

That continued a pattern of warm weather seen throughout 2013, which was Australia's warmest

year on record.'

'Nationally, six significant heatwaves were recorded through 2014; one, in southeast Australia in January, was the longest heatwave on record for that region.' <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-06/bureau-weather-wrap-2014/6001826>;

'2014 has just been confirmed as Australia's third hottest year in recorded history. It follows 2013, which was our hottest year on record - ever.

In the last 35 years, 29 years have been hotter than average, while only 6 years have been below average. Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra are already hitting the kind of temperatures we weren't expecting till 2030.

Climate change is making Australia hotter and worsening bushfire conditions.'

Warmer, drier climate locked in for Melbourne, says CSIRO/Bureau of Meteorology report

'Melbourne's climate can be expected to warm across all seasons, with less rainfall in winter and spring but more intense rain events, according to [the latest projections by the CSIRO](#) and the Bureau of Meteorology.

'The first update of the agencies' Natural Resource Management report since 2007 builds on improved modelling to project how the climate for the city and the country is likely to differ by 2030 and 2090.

'Since 2001, extreme heat records have exceeded cold records throughout Australia by three to one for maximum temperatures and five to one for minimums. Heatwaves have increased in duration, frequency and intensity in many parts of the country, the report says.

"We expect more hot days and hotter hot days and fewer cold days," CSIRO climate unit group leader Kevin Hennessy said. "We're starting to see what we can expect in the future with greater frequency and intensity."

Australia's average temperatures have already warmed 0.9 degrees since 1910, with rising greenhouse gases a contributing factor. Further warming and other climate impacts are already locked in for 2030, but the severity and extent of changes beyond then hinge on whether global carbon emissions are reduced.

"Beyond 2030, the different types of emission scenarios really matter and global action to reduce emissions can have a big effect on the ultimate impacts," Mr Hennessy said.'

The wide-ranging report from the CSIRO and weather bureau comes as governments around the world, including Australia's, are readying pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions after 2020. The United Nations wants the promises to be made public by the end of March to add momentum towards a summit in Paris in December to set a new global climate treaty.

Major climate agencies in the United States and Japan have declared 2014 to be [the world's hottest year on record](#), eclipsing 2005 and 2010. For Australia, 2013 was its hottest, with [2014 ranked third](#).

The latest report includes projections for Australia's sea-level rises, a shorter ski season with shallower snow depths, and a longer, more intense fire season. The models have "medium confidence" that tropical cyclones would be fewer but more intense when they made landfall.

The report is particularly aimed at getting planners to prepare for damage from a more volatile climate.

"There really needs to be a greater consciousness of the need to build resilience to these extreme weather events," Mr Hennessy said. "It's the extreme weather events that are really going to have the biggest impacts."

A separate study, released on Monday by [Nature Climate Change](#), by CSIRO's Cai Wenju and other researchers, found that the number of extreme La Nina events will almost double under current carbon emissions trajectories from one in 23 years during the 20th century to one in 13 years in the 21st. Ominously, about 75 per cent of the increase would come with super La Nina events following hard on the heels of their counterparts – extreme El Nino years.

For Melbourne, average temperatures will increase across all seasons, the CSIRO/Bureau of Meteorology report found. By 2030, summer temperatures, for instance, are likely to be 0.6 degrees warmer than the average for 1986-2005, and depending on the emissions scenario, 1.5-3.4 degrees warmer by 2090.

How rainfall patterns change is less clearcut in a warming world. Southern Australia – particularly the far south-west and the far south-east – is likely

to have drier winters, forcing farmers to alter crops and stock to adjust.

For Melbourne, rainfall may drop about 2 per cent throughout the year by 2030 and 7 to 9 per cent by 2090. For the latter year, the drop in winter rainfall may be as much as 10 per cent in winter and 19 per cent in spring.

While summer rains may increase for much of the country, rising temperatures are likely to cause more evaporation. Overall soil moisture and run-off levels are also likely to drop, affecting agriculture and water management, the report found.'

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/warmer-drier-climate-locked-in-for-melbourne-says-csirobureau-of-meteorology-report-20150126-12yfrf.html>;

Duck Season

Duck season seems once again imminent, although hopefully our new state government will not allow this. Once again our native wetland birds will run the gauntlet of duck shooters. Our most familiar & well-loved ducks such as Black Ducks, Wood Ducks, Chestnut Teal, Pink-eared Ducks & many others can be legally killed. However not only (so called) legal game birds are killed by hunters. The wrath of duck hunters is also directed against both protected & endangered bird species. Last year large numbers of our most endangered wetland bird, the Freckled Duck, were targeted by so called 'sportsmen'. Other wetland birds such as Black Swans, Coots, Moorhens are also targeted. Legal protection is no real protection as wildlife officials seemed more concerned about protecting duck hunters from the attention of the wicked wildlife rescuers, than protecting endangered species from indiscriminate shooters. It will be interesting to see how many shooters are prosecuted for slaughtering protected birds!

MELTON WILDLIFE

White-bellied Sea-eagle at Surbiton Park

After nesting successfully in two consecutive years in Pinkerton Forest a few years ago, White-bellied Sea-eagles are still a feature of Western Water's treatment plant at Surbiton Park. They are often seen along the adjacent Werribee River & Melton Reservoir. This large female bird landed in a tree overlooking a treatment lagoon, a mere 100 metres from people weeding; remaining there for about half an hour. The lagoon is filled with large

numbers of Redfin, as well as numerous waterbirds of various species.



White-bellied Sea-eagle at Surbiton Park

Boobook Owls in Eynesbury Forest



Juvenile Boobook in Eynesbury

This juvenile Boobook was found in Eynesbury Forest in January. A family of three Boobooks were disturbed roosting in a Grey Box Tree. Two of these were fluffy white juveniles. Boobooks are often seen roosting in the canopy of tree here, especially in hot weather.



Eastern Snake-necked Turtles in Eynesbury Lake

Birds of Eynesbury

Nora Peters & Peter Gregory recently took these magnificent photos of birds at Eynesbury ornamental lake.



Adult Australasian Grebe with young



Juvenile Australasian Grebes



Juvenile Tree Martin (Peter Gregory)

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/>



Juvenile Welcome Swallow

The two photos of the juvenile swallows show that at least two of the three swallow species seen at Eynesbury are successfully breeding.

The Welcome Swallows build their mud nests beneath the eaves of the Information Centre. They also nest beneath bridges & similar structures, as well as shopping centre entrances. The Tree Martins nest in the numerous hollow branches in Eynesbury Forest. Although the Tree Martins are quite common here they are in fact restricted to native woodlands like this (& nearby Pinkerton Forest) & are rarely seen elsewhere. Forest remnants like these are essential to the survival of woodland dependant species such as this. Fairy Martins have also been seen flying above Eynesbury Ornamental Lake. Eynesbury Ornamental Lake is home to a surprising number of wetland birds & the adjacent Eynesbury Forest is home to large numbers of birds, including many declining woodland dependent species.



Freckled Duck at Eynesbury



Freckled Ducks at Eynesbury

Freckled Ducks have once again returned to Eynesbury. The single Freckled Duck in the photo looks quite apprehensive. It has good reason to be so. It seems another duck hunting season may be again imminent! Last year many protected Freckled Ducks (Australia's most endangered waterbird) were slaughtered by hunters. Unfortunately the authorities seemed more interested in apprehending duck hunting protesters than seeking to either protect these 'protected' birds or apprehend those responsible for slaughtering them!

Superb Fairy-wren: Urban flagship species

MEG wish to enhance the habitat beneath, around & between the old trees that remain along the Arnolds Creek corridor. We wish to connect these remnant trees with indigenous understorey to restore natural habitat. This will stop them from being just isolated trees but instead make them integral parts in a restored living ecosystem.

This should enable the return of iconic birds such as the Superb Blue Wren to tracts of creek side from which they are at present absent. In 2007 MEG were actively involved in revegetation work along Little Blind Creek, (as well as City of Melton & Melbourne Water). At this stage superb Fairy Wrens were absent from this creek (a fact we observed to Melbourne Water at the time during consultation concerning habitat restoration here). Residents along here now report that 'Blue Wrens' are common along the creek, even coming into adjacent gardens!

The Superb Fairy-wren is an excellent 'target' species by which we would like to measure success. This is an achievable goal as the Superb

Fairy-wren is a common bird where there is suitable habitat. All it needs is for to re-create the low (not necessarily dense) vegetation they require as habitat. Also the Superb Fairy-wren is a highly visible bird & recently surveyed by Birdlife Australia as Australia's favourite bird. This success will have wider biodiversity implications as habitat suitable for the Superb Fairy-wren will also be suitable habitat for a whole suite of other birds.

The return of the Superb Fairy-wren to Little Blind Creek demonstrates that this is an achievable aim. They have also moved into the six plots we planted at Arnolds Creek beside Melton Christian College.

MEG LIBRARY

MEG has a library of books, reports & CD's which are available for reference or borrowing:

Books

Flora of Melbourne

Australian Plants Society Maroondah

Plants of Melbourne's Western Plains

Australian Plants Society, Keilor Plains Group

Plains Wandering

Ian Lunt, Tim Barlow & James Ross

Attracting Frogs to your Garden

Kevin Casey

A Field Guide to Frogs of Australia

Martyn Robinson

Bush Regeneration: recovering Australian landscapes

Robin A Buchanan

Attracting Wildlife to your Garden

Rodger Elliot

Habitat Corridors: their role in wildlife management & Conservation

Andrew F Bennett

Birds of the Long Forest 1885 - 2005

Hewish, Ward, Bugg & Munday

Green Guide to Birds of Australia

Peter Rowland

Photographic Guide to Birds of Australia

Jim Flegg

Long Forest: Mallee at the Back Door

Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee

Jacks Walk Notes: Day walks in Bacchus

Marsh area Jack Myers

The Nestbox Book

Gould League of Victoria

Trees of Victoria: an illustrated field guide

L. Costermans

Insects of Australia

E. Riek

Trees of Australia

H. Oakman

Orchids of Bendigo

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc

Greenpages Directory 2008

Eco-culture & sustainability lifestyle

Australian Native Plants

A M Blomberry

Native Trees & Shrubs of South-eastern Australia

Leon Costermans

Garden Book of Native Plants

Alan Seale

Trees of Victoria & Adjoining Areas

Leon Costermans

Seed Collection & Propagation

Pentland Hills L&care & Natural Heritage Trust

Macedon Ranges Flora

Riddells Creek Landcare

Environmental Weeds: Guide for SE Australia

Kate Blood

Birds in Frankston & Mornington Peninsular

Larry Wakefield & BOCA

Greeniology: how to live well, & be green

Tanya Ha

Sites of Botanical Significance in the Western Region of Melbourne

Keith McDougall

Moths of Victoria

Peter Marriott

Part 1: Silk Moths & allies

Part 2: Tiger Moths & allies

Part 3: Waves & Carpets

Part 4: Emeralds & Allies

All About Australian Bush Gardens

Maloney, Walker & Mullins

Beginners Guide to Wetland Bird identification

Melbourne Water

Revegetation: what to plant, where & how in the Moorabool Shire area

Grow West

Environmental Reports

Extension of Services: Werribee catchment

Melbourne Water

Melton Sewerage Upgrade

Western Water

Port Philip Native Vegetation Plan

PPW CMA

Western Water 2007 Annual Report

Western Water

Regional River Health Strategy

PPW CMA & Melbourne Water

Kororoit Creek: Regional Strategy 2005-2030

Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Melton Shire

Securing Our Natural Future: land & biodiversity

Victorian Government

President: Daryl Akers

Secretary: Doug Godsil

Meetings:

Phone: 0438 277 252

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