



# MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### APRIL 2015

Volume 107

#### CORPORATE MEMBERS

##### Western Land Services



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

CLPhone 03 9747 0855 or email [info@westernland.com.au](mailto: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 March

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

#### FEBRUARY

Still very little rain & the soil is extremely dry. We are in drought: in fact if not in name

#### MEG EVENTS IN MARCH

##### Cleanup Australia Day

On Sunday MEG once again participated in cleanup Australia Day, with Doug & Daryl of MEG & visitors Latif with his daughter Batrisiya.



Latif & his daughter Batrisiya



Doug cleaning up Arnolds Creek

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](http://sustainability.vic.gov.au/KABV)



Most of the area in Brookfield was fairly clean, with most of the rubbish coming out of the storm drain outlets. Passers-by congratulated us on our effort, adding that they collected rubbish as they walked along the creek. We collected four bags of rubbish & one bag of recyclables. The most unusual item this year was an empty fire extinguisher. We then went to Hannah Watts Park for a BBQ supplied by City of Melton.



### Birdwalk at Little Blind Creek



Chris & Lyn of FoTC

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 29, 2015 Chris & Lyn of Friends of Toolern Creek & Daryl of MEG participated in a bird walk along Little Blind Creek in Melton. It is home for large numbers of birds. The many old hollow trees provide nest sites for hollow-nesting birds & possums. Little Blind Creek has retained many of its ancient Red Gums with their hollows providing nest sites for native wildlife, including parrots, cockatoos, ducks & possums. Many years of revegetation work has made the creek a valuable wildlife corridor & habitat. Its wide reserve (several hundred metres wide!) is an

excellent model for what a decent creekside reserve should be! It also provides an excellent example of successful environmental restoration. During the recent catastrophic drought that ended in 2011 Little Blind Creek served as a refuge for several bird species (commonly seen around Gisborne but not usually found in Melton) including Common Bronzewing & Yellow-tailed Cockatoos. When the drought ended they were gone, presumably having returned to their normal homes.

19 bird species were seen, including:

Little Raven	Magpie	Noisy Miner
Red Wattlebird	White-plumed Honeyeater	
New Holland Honeyeater	Wellcome Swallow	
Willy Wagtail	Blackbird	Starling
Indian Myna	Long-billed Corella	Musk Lorikeet
Rainbow Lorikeet	Red-rumped Parrot	
Crested Pigeon	Turtledove	House Sparrow



Lyn walking among trees at Little Blind Creek

### COMING MEG EVENTS

#### Weeding at Brookfield Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April 10.00

We will remove Galenia (Carpet Weed) at our restoration site at Brookfield. Meet at Arnolds Creek in Black Dog Drive (near the Black Dog Road Bridge) just west of the roundabout of Coburns Road & Black Dog Drive. Morning tea with hot & cold drinks. There is a small kindergarten carpark here & access is easy. The site is very child friendly. Melway Map 336 Ref G11.

#### Weeding at Brookfield Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 10.00

Details as above

#### Planting trees at Navan Park Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June 10.00

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:

email: [darylakers@gmail.com](mailto:darylakers@gmail.com)  
Website: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.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 2015**

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October – Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

Details below

**BIRD WEEK IN MELTON 2015**

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October – Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

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

**Opening of Bird Week**

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October**

Melton Library Balam Balam Room

**Bird walk at Caroline Springs**

TBA

**Bird walk at Eynesbury**

TBA

**Birds at Melton Botanic Garden**

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 10.00 – 12.00**

Local bird expert Geraldine Kelly (of MEG & FMBG) will discuss birds & their habitat at the Friends of Melton Botanic Garden depot

**BIRDWATCHING IN MELTON 2015**

All MEG walks are easy walking & child friendly, on defined paths. Other dates & venues TBA

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April****Toolern Creek: Big Red**

MEG & Friends of Toolern Creek (FOTC) will host a bird walk along this beautiful creek that has been restored over several years by FOTC members. Toolern Creek (as well as Arnolds Creek, Little Blind Creek & Ryans Creek) forms a crucial

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. There is a footpath that runs along the creek. Meet at 'Big Red' beside the Western Freeway. Corner of Tamar Drive and Raymond Street, Melton South. Melway 337 Ref A12

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May****Arnolds Creek: Brookfield**

This is MEG's primary environmental revegetation site.

**Other proposed Bird Watching venues**

Strathulloh Woodland

Hannah Watts

Melton Gilgai Woodland

Eynesbury Forest

Long Forest Mallee

**OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS****Cobbledicks Ford Family Day**

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, Wyndham City, Melbourne Water, Werribee District Historical Society 7 Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group hosted Cobbledicks Ford Family Day, at Cobbledick Ford, as part of Wyndham's Green Living Series 2015. About 55 visitors participated.



The day's events included:

- A conservation crew member discussed the management of the Reserve.
- Marquee with information which people can browse and talk to staff
- Garden vintage games –scattered around the reserve for families to play as they wish. These included giant wooden Connect 4, croquet, quoits, timber Scatter Set game.
- Morning tea, cakes & fruit



- Damper making. Visitors had the opportunity to cook their own damper, spread with butter, jam or honey
- Waterwatch – micro invertebrates activity
- Nature and History Walk. Visitors were shown bird nesting hollows, scar trees, Werribee Blue Box trees, dramatic volcanic escarpments, local birds and local native vegetation, Cobbledicks house ruin, Mt. Cotterell State School site and the garden.

Several Blue Box trees in the reserve were grown from seed & planted by members of Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group (PLEG) almost ten years ago. Most are doing well with one tree now over six metres in height!



Blue Box tree planted by PLEG

## COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

### Birding at Pinkerton & Eynesbury: Sunday June 16<sup>th</sup> 09.00

Birdlife Australia & PLEG invite the community to join them birding at Pinkerton & Bush's Paddock in the morning, Eynesbury Forest in afternoon. 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 100 at Eynesbury to date. For more info: Dave Torr: 9749 5141 or [davidtorr@gmail.com](mailto:davidtorr@gmail.com); Mob 0458 035 896 (BLA), [www.birdlife.org.au/events](http://www.birdlife.org.au/events); Meet at Mt Cottrell Road. Melway Map 221 Ref H8 Gates open 9.00am, walk starts 9.15

### Platypus Festival Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 12.00

Friends of Toolern Creek will host their 7th

Platypus Festival on Saturday October 10<sup>th</sup> 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. The Platypus Festival is the biggest environmental festival in the western region! Meet at 'Big Red' beside the Western Freeway. Corner of Tamar Drive and Raymond Street, Melton South. Melway 337 Ref A12

## OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Aquaponics for Beginners: Melton City Council & Melton Sustainable Living Group Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 7pm to 8 pm

Grow cheap healthy food at home! Come & learn how to provide your family with wonderful fresh fruit, herbs, veggies & fish all from your back garden (includes free three month membership of Melton Sustainable Living Group).

Meet Craig Matthews from Western Aquaponics (a combination of aquaculture and hydroponics) that you can easily do in your backyard. For more information go to [westernaquaponics.com.au](http://westernaquaponics.com.au)

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 7pm to 8 pm (refreshments afterwards) Melton Library and Learning Hub, 31 McKenzie Street, Melton

**Free PLUS** win an aquaponic design for your home. **RSVP** Essential for catering  
Environmental Educator (Linda Bradburn)  
Email: [lindab@melton.vic.gov.au](mailto:lindab@melton.vic.gov.au); phone: 9747 7200

### Autumn @ Eynesbury Community Walk Eynesbury Homestead Thursday 7 May 9.30

Celebrate National Heart Health Week and come along to the AUTUMN @ EYNESBURY Community Walk. Wear something RED to show your support for the Heart Foundation. This autumn, turn over a new leaf and join a Heart Foundation Walking group. A healthy morning tea will be served after the walk.

WHEN: Thursday 7 May 2015

TIME: 10.00am (registration from 9.30am)

WHERE: Eynesbury Homestead Eynesbury Road (Mel 226 H2)

COST: Gold Coin Donation – proceeds go to the Heart Foundation  
RSVP: Active

Communities Officer Email:

[leannec@melton.vic.gov.au](mailto:leannec@melton.vic.gov.au); or phone: 9747 7200  
Melton City Council

President: Daryl Akers  
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Meetings:

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

## OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

### Threatened wetlands & grasslands of our western region

Wetlands are a conspicuous feature of our western volcanic plains, as well as native grasslands. Protection of the natural environment as part of urban planning does much for urban liveability as well as biodiversity & conservation. Unfortunately, along with our native grasslands, these wetlands also threatened.

These small wetlands are still home to native birds, including vulnerable species such as Australasian Bittern, Latham's Snipe, Royal Spoonbill, Brown Quail, Australasian Shoveler. The critically endangered Growling Grass Frog also finds refuge here. Large numbers of wetland birds breed in these after heavy rains. Again, breeding sites of our local birds are being needlessly bulldozed.

Latham's Snipe is an endangered bird that migrates between Australia & Japan each year, breeding in Japan during our winter & joining us for our summer. The western region in general (& Melton in particular) provides both a refuge & stopping off zone as they pass through this region. Latham's Snipe are considered near threatened in Japan & vulnerable here in Australia due to habitat destruction, urbanisation, land reclamation & domestic predators.

[http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon\\_id=863](http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=863);

Paynes Road Swamp is a 15 hectare Lignum Swamp with many large old Red Gum trees. It is recorded as having important nesting and feeding habitat for birds such as Tawny Frogmouth, Eastern Rosella and Red-rumped Parrot. Other local wetlands under threat are Troupes Rd North Swamp & Rockbank Railway Swamp. These small wetland sites could easily be retained among the vast acreages planned for development.

Hopetoun Park is a local example where ephemeral wetlands have been retained, as a feature of the residential development. Similarly, the Red Gum wetland in Strathtulloh has also been retained as part of the plan.

It can be done. Not to do so is miserly.



Podolepis in Greigs Road native grassland

This display of Showy Podolepis in Greigs Road is another example of spectacular native grassland in Melton. Even in grey, drizzly conditions the spectacular native wildflowers make a magnificent display. The future of the roadside grasslands beside Greigs Road, is also in doubt.

Podolepis, along with a wealth of other native wildflowers once carpeted the grasslands across this whole region. Native wildflowers are now restricted to just a few surviving sites. Podolepis appear to be restricted to two sites in this region; this site in Greigs Road & on nearby Mt Cottrell. Protection of these two sites is therefore crucial to the survival of this species in this region. Less than 1% of native grasslands now remain. Sites such as Greigs Road are now small but valuable grassland remnants. As well as the Showy Podolepis that are so noticeable from the road, there are many other wildflowers here such as yellow Goodenia, Blue Devil, pink Bindweed, & tiny white star-like Stellaria. Photos of Greigs Road grassland on: <https://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/2013/10/23/greigs-road-wildflowers/>;



Podolepis in Greigs Road with native bee

Vast tracts of land in the west are available for residential development. It is inconceivable that



these few remnants of natural woodlands, grasslands & wetlands cannot be kept, especially as they comprise such tiny proportions of the total land to be developed. Failure to protect these tiny remnants is incomprehensible.



Pink Bindweed in Greigs Road



Ptilotis spathulatus in Greigs Road



Goodenia in Greigs Road

We still have the opportunity to develop the western region sensitively. Melton has demonstrated that it is able to build houses for people while protecting its natural environment. Numerous environmental awards over the years attest to this.

Failure to do so now will create just another bland expanse of suburbia. We can do better!

## MELTON WILDLIFE

### Brown Earwig at MBG

This native Brown Earwig (*Labidura truncata*) was recently found by Friends of Melton Botanic Garden. It is quite boldly marked & almost 3 cm in length, quite unlike the common introduced ones we usually see. It keeps its cerci raised up high in a threatening manner. One was also found during Cleanup Australia last year by MEG at Brookfield. The Brown Earwig (*Labidura truncata*) is the commonly widespread species according to: <http://www.minibeastwildlife.com.au/Earwigs.htm>; <http://www.ento.csiro.au/education/insects/dermaptera.html>; & [http://www.ces.csiro.au/aicn/system/c\\_1091.htm](http://www.ces.csiro.au/aicn/system/c_1091.htm);



Brown Earwig (photo by Janet Dyke)

According to CSIRO '*Labidura truncata* is a large native earwig that prefers to feed on soft-bodied caterpillars both larger and smaller than themselves. It grabs caterpillars with its pincers and holds it there while feeding. *L. truncata* may also feed on other insects, including other earwigs if it is hungry enough.'



### Platypus at Werribee

Two juvenile Platypus were caught in the Werribee River at Werribee in March. The Platypus Survey found one male & one female Platypus. According to the survey team *"Two platypuses may not seem like many but this is a good result for Werribee. And the fact they are juveniles shows successful reproduction is occurring."*



Juvenile male Platypus found in Werribee

### Sacred Kingfishers in Melton



Sacred Kingfisher in Melton South

This Sacred Kingfisher was seen in a Melton South garden last Spring, marking their return here for the summer. It made three appearances here over two days.

Kingfishers are one of the many birds that migrate here from the north to spend summer here & breed. One spent about a week at Brookfield last summer. They probably use rivers & creeks as migration corridors. They seem to make regular appearances in Melton over summer although they are more likely to be seen beside Arnolds, Toolern,

Ryans & Little Blind Creeks, or the Werribee River, as well as Eynesbury Ornamental Lake. They are also seen in local woodlands such as Pinkerton & Eynesbury Forests. Their appearance has been described by one local observer as like a tiny, blue Kookaburra! Kingfishers, like Kookaburras, parrots, cockatoos, rosellas, owls & possums, need tree hollows in which to breed. If we wish to keep wildlife such as these then we need to keep the old, hollow trees in which they roost & nest. Even old, dead trees are valuable as nesting sites. The presence of many of these trees along Melton's creeks & along the Werribee River is the reason why we continue to see examples of our native wildlife.

We therefore need to protect our local creeks & woodlands as wildlife habitat & corridors, as well as protecting our old, hollow & even dead hollow trees if we wish to protect our local wildlife.

### Birds in Brazil



Ariel Toucan in Rio Zoo by Geraldine

MEG's Geraldine Kelly is at present in South America. She recently sent us this photo of a Toucan.

*'Hi everyone,*

*Our first 5 days in South America have been great Rio was wonderful we spent 3 full days there. Our accommodation was on Copacabana Beach and our room overlooked the Atlantic Ocean. Our first day we did a city tour which included Sugarloaf Mountain and Christ The Redeemer Statue wonderful views from both points. The next day we went to the Botanical Gardens where we saw the Ariel Toucan which only is in this area and endangered. Our next stop was Iguazu Falls an amazing place a must see place. No waterfall can compare to this. Today we go to Buenos Aires to board the Golden Princess for our 14 day cruise round Cape Horn to Santiago Chile. '*