



MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER MAY 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;

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

MAY

Still very little rain & the soil is extremely dry. We are in drought: in fact if not in name
Mid-April wind, rain & hail.

MEG EVENTS IN APRIL

Little Blind Creek



Meeting with Daniel Moloney at Little Blind Creek

MEG has a new member, David Moloney. David lives beside Little Blind Creek & is interested in re-vegetation work on the creek that faces his home. David is also an Ecology student!

On Thursday 23rd April MEG's Geraldine & Daryl, participated in a meeting with Daniel & Melton Council's Linda Bradburn & Tony Herwerth. We discussed how both MEG & Melton Council could help David in his project to restore the natural environment of upper Little Blind Creek. The creek is quite degraded & treeless in this new housing estate (apart from those planted by Melbourne Water) in previous years but Daniel hopes to restore its natural environment, with Melton Council & MEG's help.

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

Vern Davey Naturalists Hut: *Heritage award awarded to Margaret & Roger Wood*

On Thursday 23rd April Margaret & Roger Wood were presented with a Heritage Award by Mayor Sophie Ramsey. The nomination was made by MEG, for the work done by Roger Wood in restoring the Naturalists Hut at Toolern Vale, originally built by Vern Davey. Mr Wood has restored the hut with help from a Melton Council grant. Mr Wood described the hut before restoration as *'termite ridden & held together only by the plaster panels!'*



Sophie Ramsay with Margaret & Roger Wood

The Naturalists' Hut was built by Vern Davey in 1933. Vern Davey was an apiarist who owned the property (originally called 'Meliodora' many years ago. Mr Davey was a passionate bird lover & established the Toolern Vale Bird Sanctuary at his property in the 1930's. At this time he also built the Naturalists' Hut on the property, so that naturalists & bird watchers could stay there to better observe the wildlife. The Naturalists Hut at Toolern Vale became widely known as a centre of bird watching activity in the Western Region.

'At his own expense. Mr Davey constructed a cabin, which was officially opened in October 1933 for the use of visiting bird watchers, & the area was frequently visited from that date up to the 1960's.'

Birds of the Long Forest 1889 – 2005 page 11

'The Toolern Vale Bird Sanctuary was a place of constant activity, but never more than during the Gould League's Bird Days, when school children visited for a day of nature study. The children were escorted in groups around a series of birds' nests,

with a 10 minute talk given at each station by a knowledgeable birdwatcher.with up to 1000 children attending '

Birds of the Long Forest 1889 – 2005 page 106



Before restoration in 2008



After restoration in 2014

Melton has a long historic connection with bird watching & natural history. Melton & our local region has been in the forefront of interest in the natural environment for a very long time. There has been a long history of bird watching here, dating back to the 1880's, when the railway first came to Melton. Field Naturalists Club of Victoria member & early ornithologist A J Campbell was a member of the Pinkerton family, early settlers at Melton. He advocated the creation of 'Wattle Day' to commemorate these well-known Australian flowers & as a celebration of Australia. A J Campbell's son, AG Campbell, (a foundation member of the Bird Observers Club) visited the Naturalists Hut many times in the 1930's. Bryan

Campbell, grandson of AJ Campbell, continues an active interest in local historical matters. Margaret Wood was Shire President of Melton for many years. More info on the hut on:

www.melton.vic.gov.au/files/b35aa26a-7efd.../HO_033_Norwood.pdf;

Congratulations to Margaret & Roger Wood for saving both a piece of Melton's heritage & a link to Melton's early history of bird watching & natural history.

Bird Walk at Toolern Creek



Geraldine, Daryl & Denise

On Saturday 25th April MEG hosted a bird walk along this beautiful creek that has been restored over several years by FOTC members. Present were Geraldine, Nora & Daryl of MEG & Denise from Bacchus Marsh. 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. Despite the dull & drizzly conditions we still saw a total of 24 bird species. Small family groups of Wood Ducks were conspicuous, as were scattered Black Ducks.

A highlight of the walk was sighting a Mistletoebird! These brightly coloured birds are relatively common but are rarely seen, & even more rarely photographed, due to their tiny size & cryptic habits. Identification was slow, difficult & at first contentious, despite the fact that it was perched at the top of bare branches in the open; due to dull conditions & rain-spotted binoculars! The prolific Mistletoes that hang from our eucalypts are testament to the ubiquitous presence of these

cryptic little birds. On last year's bird walk here, Geraldine discovered a Mistletoebird nest near this spot; a tiny silken bag suspended above the creek. Evidence that these small brilliantly coloured birds are residents of Toolern Creek. Details & photos of Mistletoe Birds on:

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/species/Dicaeum-hirundinaceum>;



Mistletoebird at Toolern Creek



Wood Ducks at Toolern Creek

Although this was a 'bird walk' we still saw several insects. Nora's sharp eyes spotted several Spotted Amber ladybird beetles, with their larvae. Both adults & larvae were hungrily devouring aphids.

Later we saw the distinctive track made by a Mole Cricket, (*Gryllotalpa*) just below the surface. The front legs of these crickets are like shovels, for underground tunnelling. Photos by Nora Peters. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_cricket;

Birds seen were:

| | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Darter | Pied Cormorant |
| Black Duck | Wood Duck |
| Turtledove | Domestic Pigeon |

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Secretary: Doug Godsil
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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
Website: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au/>

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Crimson Rosella | Red-rumped parrot |
| Galah | House Sparrow |
| White-plumed Honeyeater | New Holland Honeyeater |
| Red Wattlebird | Indian Mynah |
| Starling | Welcome Swallow |
| Willy Wagtails | Magpie lark |
| Black-fronted Cuckoo-shrike | Magpie |
| Blackbird | Raven |
| Blue Wren | Mistletoebird |



Spotted Amber Ladybird eating aphid



Spotted Amber Ladybird larva



Aphid at Toolern Creek

The rain kept away until we arrived back at the cars. The rain then continued for the rest of the afternoon.



Mole Cricket underground track



Mole Cricket

COMING MEG EVENTS

Weeding at Brookfield Saturday 9th May 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.

Planting trees at Navan Park Saturday 6th June 10.00

On Saturday 6th June MEG will return to Navan Park to plant Red Gums saplings around lake (as per aerial photo above). Many years ago MEG assisted in planting trees here (top left of the photo), as well as the south west of the park. A ring of Red Gums fringing the lake will create a

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more natural appearance, as well as creating more bird habitat. In decades to come these will provide nest hollows for hollow nesting species such as ducks, owls, parrots, cockatoos & possums.



Navan Park Lake

National Tree Day

Brookfield Sunday July 26th.

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.

Planting Red Gums in Clarkes Road wetland

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 18th October – Saturday 24th October

Details below

BIRD WEEK IN MELTON 2015

Sunday 18th October – Saturday 24th October

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

Opening of Bird Week

Sunday 18th October

Melton Library Balam Balam Room

Bird walk at Caroline Springs

TBA

Bird walk at Eynesbury

TBA

Birds at Melton Botanic Garden

Friday 23rd 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

Sunday 24th May

Arnolds Creek: Brookfield

This is MEG's primary environmental revegetation site. 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.

Other proposed Bird Watching venues

Strathulloh Woodland

Hannah Watts

Melton Gilgai Woodland

Eynesbury Forest

Long Forest Mallee

COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

Regional Forum on Rabbit Control

8th May Rowsley Public Hall, 9.00

Glenmore Rd, Rowsley (Melways Map 7 B6 near junction of Glenmore and Dog Trap Gully roads)

Free Public Event / Free BBQ lunch

RSVP: To assist with catering and transport to the demonstration site please advise who will be attending by 5th May, by contacting Max Coster facilitator@mln.org.au; or 0409 177 461

For updates on this event check the website at www.mln.org.au;

Pinkerton Forest: *creating a forest*

Friday 22nd & Saturday 23rd May 9.00-12.00

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group (PLEG) invite the community to help plant a forest!

This ambitious & innovative project by Western Water & PLEG, begun in 2011, aims to create a forest on a once bare paddock between Pinkerton

Forest and Bush's Paddock. The Pinkerton Link project will connect these two woodland remnants. Many of the Grey Box trees planted in 2011 are already almost 2 metres tall! We will be planting understory species. Native grasses and shrubs will be planted. The grasses will provide seed for the birds and the shrubs will provide perfect places to build nests! Holes will be drilled by a contractor prior to the planting day.

Friday 22nd May 1.00 – 4.00
site preparation & some planting
 Saturday 23rd May 9.00 – 12.00
main planting event

Birding at Pinkerton & Eynesbury: Sunday June 16th 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; Mob 0458 035 896 (BLA), 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 10th October 12.00

Friends of Toolern Creek will host their 7th Platypus Festival on Saturday October 10th 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 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Wetlands better than rainforests at storing carbon, say Deakin University scientists

According to The Age February 15th February 2015:

'Swamps could be 50 times more effective in battling climate change than rainforests, according to new modelling by Deakin University scientists.

They also found that swamps, or freshwater wetlands, could bank up to one-third of the carbon found in terrestrial soils, and yet they only make up 4 per cent of the world's surface.

'These are the early results in a research project that's investigating how much carbon is stored in south-west Victorian wetlands, and the impact of wetland restoration on the ability for these systems to hold carbon. The study is an Australian first.

'Rebecca Lester, senior lecturer in Freshwater ecology, said that it's well known that forests soak up carbon dioxide which is converted to food via the interplay of sunlight. The problem is, the carbon remains in storage only for the life span of the tree.

"When trees die, the wood breaks down and the carbon dioxide is released back into the atmosphere," Dr Lester said.

'In mature forests, she said, the rate at which carbon is stored is approaching the same rate at which it breaks down.

'The advantage of wetlands in capturing and storing carbon - known as biosequestration - are twofold. Inflows bring in tree matter and leaves which then settle on the bottom, so water flows in effect act as a rake, gathering up carbon sources. Once in the wetland, they're buried first by water and then by sediment which prevents the carbon being released.

'Also, "they are likely to break down more slowly, thus acting as a carbon sink", Dr Lester said.

'An important part of the research project will be developing and defining robust methods for measuring carbon stocks - through measuring pH and nutrient concentrations, for instance - so that rapid, affordable assessments can be made across large numbers of wetlands, Dr Lester said.

'This is important for applied ecology, enabling natural resource managers and landholders to reliably estimate and enhance their carbon sequestration. Biosequestration is regarded as one of the single largest opportunities for reducing Co2 emissions in Australia.

'Unfortunately, the potential for wetlands as carbon sinks is compromised by the rate at which they are disappearing from the planet. A 2012 report from

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the UN found that half the world's wetlands had been destroyed since the beginning of the 20th century - either for agriculture (because the carbon-rich soils are good for growing crops) or human habitation.

"In the future, their agricultural value will have to be weighed against their value as carbon sinks," Dr Lester said.

'Dr Rebecca Lester has received a Thomas Davies Research Grant from the Australian Academy of Science to undertake the wetland project with her Deakin colleagues Dr Peter Macreadie and Dr Jan Barton.' <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/wetland-s-better-than-rainforests-at-storing-carbon-say-deakin-university-scientists-20150214-13euul.html>;

OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS

Aquaponics for Beginners: Melton City Council & Melton Sustainable Living Group Thursday 7th 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;

Thursday 7th 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; 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; or phone: 9747 7200
Melton City Council

Women's Health Information Afternoon Tea Stevenson House Friday 15th May 1.00-2.30

This event will be facilitated by a nurse from Djerriwarrh Health Services who specialises in all facets of women's health issues. This is a free event which will benefit women of all backgrounds and ages. Bookings essential through Stevenson House or the Melton and Caroline Springs Libraries.

Amanda Venda, Neighbourhood Participation Support Officer, Melton City Council, Phone Stevenson House 9363 5137, Hillside Community Centre 9449 8027, Taylors Hill Youth & Community Centre 9747 5424, amandav@melton.vic.gov.au; or melton.vic.gov.au;

MELTON WILDLIFE

Birds at Eynesbury

Cockatoos taking care of an old bird

Local wildlife photographer Nora Peters makes the interesting observation of a flock of wild Sulphur-crested Cockatoos appearing to take care of an old bird! Cockatoos & parrots are long lived birds. Perhaps cockatoo society is more complex than we give them credit for & does not necessarily reflect 'the law of the jungle'.

Nora has also taken more photos of birds at Eynesbury.

'Hi all

We went to Eynesbury today for a short visit, I went down passed the Shearing shed and didn't find too many species of birds. On the way back sighted Eastern Rosellas, Red-rumped Parrots, Starlings, Magpies, Superb Fairy-wrens Wrens and several Galahs and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, heard a Whistling Kite, usual suspects at the lakes but no Freckles, two White Ibis and two Black Fronted Dotterels. In the trees around the lake the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were getting up to their antics and as I watched the Long Billed Corellas joined them and then I spotted the [Sulphur-crested Cockatoo/ Long Billed Corella] Hybrid high up and with the Long Bills, tried to get some photos but not as good

as I had got last time that I had found them down the back. Eventually they dispersed.... but then they flew on to the roof of wooden platform and as I was getting a couple of shots, the Hybrid came and settled in on the top left corner just up from where I was standing. Looks pretty healthy and was socialising with both the Long Bills and the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, there is a very old Cockatoo amongst them and they all seem to look after it.. Hope you all enjoy the shots! Regards

Nora

PS last saw the 2 Freckled Ducks on the 31st March

PPS We went to Serendip Sanctuary yesterday for the first time in three years, very dry throughout but I managed a photo of the Freckled (male) Duck in full splendour, seemed to be a breeding pair J'



Hybrid Cockatoo / Corella at Eynesbury



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo at Eynesbury



Long-billed Corella at Eynesbury



'The Oldie'



Male Freckled Duck at Serendip

