



# MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

7No. AOO4OO49F

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### JUNE 2015

Volume 108

#### 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](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 Wednesday June 17<sup>th</sup>

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

The weather bureau has made it official. We are in an El Niño cycle. For the last six or so months we have been in drought, in fact if not in name, with little rain & the soil is very dry.

MEG's Peter Sell observes that many wildflowers are blooming now, indicating a dry year to come & confirming the declaration by the Bureau of Meteorology that we are into an El Niño cycle.

#### MEG EVENTS IN MAY

##### Weeding at Brookfield

On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May Geraldine, Doug & Daryl of MEG removed Galenia (Carpet Weed) from our restoration site at Brookfield. The ground covers Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*), Nodding Saltbush (*Einadia nutans*) & Berry Saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*) we planted a few years ago (supplied by Judy Allen of the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre) were growing vigorously. Unfortunately so was the Galenia. The Galenia was growing thickly intertwined with the native groundcovers, making weed control difficult. Each weed had to be individually & painstakingly removed, sometimes by lifting the saltbush groundcovers to remove the weeds hidden beneath.



Doug & Geraldine removing Galenia at Brookfield

We had our usual Willy Wagtail companions waiting to examine what we may have dug up. Our

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)

Willy Wagtail with no eyebrows later appeared in the carpark as we were leaving.

Brookfield is looking impressive after extensive brush cutting by Western Land Services. Work on Arnolds Creek West (beside the Brookfield Lifestyle Leisure Centre) was initiated by Melbourne Water while work at our original site (Arnolds Creek East) was funded by MEG. We will have WLS return later to follow up, when the weeds start to re-sprout with winter rains.

Although the creekside under restoration appears a bit overplanted & bushy at present; as the eucalypts grow larger they will eliminate much of the understory beneath. This will eventually result in a more natural looking ecosystem, with large creekside trees towering over the creek, with a sparser understory of Poa grasses & scattered shrubs. The re-vegetated creekside is now haven to a variety of birdlife. We have also bitten the bullet & replaced the stakes around last year's plantings, after they were broken by vandals last year. Hopefully they will be allowed to remain, protecting our plants from being mown.

### **Bird & Crocodile Survey at Brookfield**

On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May Nora & Daryl of MEG & John Smith participated in a bird walk along Arnolds Creek, starting at Brookfield. Due to the crocodile reported in Arnolds Creek in the local media we decided a joint Bird & Crocodile Survey may be appropriate! However, no crocs were seen lurking in the murky depths of Arnolds Creek. The morning was initially cold but had warmed up by about ten o'clock, bringing a few more birds out of hiding.

### **Nora describes the walk:**

Daryl and I enjoyed a stroll at Brookfield along the creek, even though cold and at first dull, quite a number of birds (haven't done the count yet!) .....the Hobby was after a Magpie when we first saw it and then it perched high in the tree.....the female Galah was digging the ground and then sat in the tree to let us pass and then as we came back she was digging the ground again!....the Superb Fairy-wrens, (I think Daryl counted 10) were down the Brooklyn Rd end of our walk as were several House Sparrows.....John Smith caught up with us there and on the way back the Rainbow Lorikeets were sitting in a tree and then sat in and around a hollow claiming it for

themselves ☺.....also found a Fungi Fairy ring and saw a few wild flowers that Daryl had planted.



Australian Hobby at Arnolds Creek

An Australian Hobby perched in a tall tree over the creek asserted its authority by pursuing a Magpie that approached its tree. Near Melton Christian College were the remains of two Long-billed Corellas on the ground, presumably having fallen victim to a raptor. In one case, head, wings, claws, feathers & a few bones only remained. Hobbies are commonly seen in Melton & are often seen hunting lorikeets, honeyeaters & starlings, but who knows if one could take on a larger Corella? Peregrine Falcons take Galahs, pigeons & ducks so would be a more likely candidate; but these are seen less commonly in town than Hobbies. Brown Goshawks are commonly seen in Melton gardens & along our creeks so maybe a goshawk may have taken a slow flying Corella.



Rainbow Lorikeets guarding nest hollow

Despite the initially cold morning the sun came out giving us a beautiful autumn morning. We were pleased to see a number of Superb Fairy-wrens in the trees & bushes we planted with Melton



Christian College several years ago, beside Brooklyn Road. This site was once a wasteland of bare landfill with little birdlife but now the native vegetation here supports a variety of birds. Bird numbers were down somewhat, probably due to wintry weather. A pair of Rainbow Lorikeets were clearly agitated about our approach but they refused to move as we walked closer for a better photo; clearly intent in defending their nest site from all comers.

New Holland Honeyeater	Red Wattlebird
White-browed Honeyeater	Magpie
Little Raven	Blue Wren
Rainbow Lorikeet	Galah
White-faced Heron	Purple Swamphen
Australian Hobby	

There was a variety of mushrooms, toadstools & other assorted fungi. This photo shows a sector of what must once have been an impressive fairy ring.



## COMING MEG EVENTS

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

On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> 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 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.

Meet in Navan Park carpark next to children's playground



Navan Park Lake

### Planting Red Gums in Clarkes Road wetland Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July 10.00-12.00

### National Tree Day Brookfield Sunday July 26<sup>th</sup>.

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 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

### BIRDWATCHING IN MELTON 2015

All MEG walks are easy walking & child friendly, on defined paths.

### Birdwalk at Caroline Springs 27<sup>th</sup> June 9.00 – 11.00

Last walk 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 old medical centre beside the large lake at the entrance at Caroline Springs BLVD. Melway 358 Ref G4

**Birdwalk in Strathtulloh****Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 9.00 – 11.00**

Strathtulloh Woodland, along the paved walking track (no bushwalking required). Meet in Strathtulloh Circuit Melway Page 343 Ref A12

**Birdwalk in Long Forest Mallee****Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August 9.00 – 11.00**

Long Forest Mallee (LFM) is a unique Mallee remnant between Melton & Bacchus Marsh. Long Forest Road Melway 335 Ref E3

**Birdwalk in Melton Gilgal Woodland****Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 9.00 – 11.00**

Remnant Grey Box/Yellow Gum woodland, Meet in Harkness Road. Melway 330 Ref B11

**Birdwalk in Strathtulloh****Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November 9.00 – 11.00****Other proposed Bird Watching venues**

Strathtulloh Woodland	Hannah Watts
Melton Gilgai Woodland	Eynesbury Forest
Long Forest Mallee	

**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

**Owl discussion****Melton Library Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October****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

**OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS****Werribee Wagtails: Bird Watching in Melton**

On Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May MEG's Geraldine Kelly led the Werribee Wagtails birdwatchers around Melton.

*'Hi everyone,*

*Just to let you know that we had a very successful day yesterday when I took 24 of the Werribee Birdlife group (Wagtails) around Caroline Springs wetlands, Hannah Watts Park and The Botanic Gardens. The weather was cold windy and the occasional light shower but it didn't stop us. At Caroline Springs there were lots of White Ibis and the occasional Straw-necked Ibis, a few Hardhead and both Grebe species as well as cormorants, ducks and 2 swans.*

*'At Hannah Watts we saw 4 lorikeet species as well as 3 Gang Gang Cockatoos which got everyone excited. Next we moved on to windy Botanic Gardens where we saw another Hoary-headed Grebe which was unusual and a Kookaburra which kept flying from tree to tree in front of us. This was the first time I've seen a kookaburra at the gardens but I did hear them in the summer. We all had a wonderful day, Geraldine'*

**Greening the West - One Million Trees**

Greg Hunt announcing Greening the West

On Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May Federal Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt, announced the Greening the West project. One million trees will be planted in Melbourne's west in conjunction with LeadWest and local councils. The announcement was made at Kororoit Creek in Altona. Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek's Geoff Mitchelmore spoke passionately about the project & about work done by his group over many years to dramatically restore native vegetation to the creek, after having heard the creek described as 'just a drain' several years ago. Greg Hunt & Geoff Mitchelmore planting the first tree (a Lightwood Wattle) beside Kororoit Creek. As Mr



Hunt said *"only 999,999 trees to go!"*



Greg Hunt & Geoff Mitchelmore planting a tree

According to Leadwest:

*'Focused on Melbourne's six western municipalities (Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham), the Greening the West of Melbourne (One Million Trees) Project supports achievement of a vision of sustainable, liveable, healthy communities through urban and peri-urban greening.'*

*'Project seed and tube stock will be sourced (through application of required procurement processes) from local indigenous nurseries with a proven record of accomplishment, such as EcoDynamics of Keilor and Western Plains Flora of Wildwood. Sustained outcomes will result from successful planting and a high "strike rate" ensuring plantings funded under the programme can be maintained for the long term.'*

The sub-projects are:

- \* Werribee River Nature Link Enhancements
- \* Point Cook Coastal Park and Port Phillip Bay & Western Shoreline Nature Link Enhancements
- \* Maribyrnong River Valley Nature Link Enhancements
- \* Kororoit Creek Nature Links and Brimbank Urban Environs Enhancements
- \* Toolern Creek and Melton Urban Environs Enhancements

<http://www.leadwest.com.au/Resources/Western-Agenda/Sustainable-Liveability/Greening-the-West/Greening-the-West-One-Million-Trees;>

We will of course need to ensure that trees planted in Melton (& other areas) are locally indigenous trees, of local provenance.

Federal funding of environmental projects in the western region is most welcome. Environmental challenges as unprecedented urbanization & development takes place over the next couple of decades will be enormous. All such help is greatly appreciated! Congratulations for this ambitious project!

### Birding at Pinkerton & Eynesbury



Boobook in hollow in Eynesbury

On Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup> Dave Torr led a group of birders on a survey in Pinkerton Forest, Bush's Paddock & Eynesbury Forest; hosted by Birdlife Australia & Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group. 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.

Dave Torr writes:

*'Highlights of the quarterly survey by Birdlife Werribee ..... included a juvenile Pallid Cuckoo being fed by White-plumed Honeyeater, a young male White-winged Triller & nesting Diamond Firetails. At Eynesbury there were two Freckled Ducks on the lake'*

In Eynesbury the group puzzled over a mass of noisy honeyeaters in a tree by the track. Iain's



sharp eyes spied the cause of the commotion, a Boobook Owl that quickly hopped into its hollow when observed.

We were pleased to find large numbers of Zebra Finches, mainly surrounding Pinkerton Link. There were also large numbers of these in Bush's Paddock Woodland. Their numbers appear to be increasing since the planting of large tracts of spear grasses in the Pinkerton Link Project



Zebra Finches in Pinkerton Forest



Diamond Firetail nest in Bush's Paddock

About a dozen or so Diamond Firetails were found in Bush's Paddock Woodland. Several were carrying grass & feathers to a grass nest in a Grey Box sapling. Until now we had only seen them in Pinkerton Forest.

#### **Pinkerton Link: *creating a forest***

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> & Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May Western Water (WW) & Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group (PLEG) & invited the community to help plant a forest!

This ambitious & innovative project by WW & 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. Holes were drilled by a contractor prior to the planting day for ease & speed of planting.



Volunteers planting in Pinkerton Link



CVA volunteers at Pinkerton Link

We planted 300 Tree Violets & 300 mixed native grasses (propagated by women of the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre under the supervision of Judy Allen & potted into tubes by PLEG's Irene)

#### **COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS**

##### **Community Planting at Caroline Springs**

**The Ridge Parkland, Saturday 11 July– 12 pm**

Linda Bradburn, Environmental Education Officer  
Melton City Council writes:

*'Join neighbours and friends to enjoy nature and plant some native grasses on the Kororoit Creek.'*

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

We will be removing tree guards and improving the habitat quality for local wildlife. Meet the Connies and get collectable local wildlife cards, Bring the family along and have a fun morning outside. It may be a bit muddy, so good footwear and old clothes are a must. Please bring gloves. Saturday 11 July, 10am – 12 pm (just drop in for a while) The Ridge Parkland, Caroline Springs  
Melway reference: 356 E9 Free, refreshments at 12PM, Special thanks to Melbourne Water for the Corridors of Green grant ' RSVP: Environmental Educator Melton City Council, [lindab@melton.vic.gov.au](mailto:lindab@melton.vic.gov.au); 9747 7200

### **Grow West Community Planting Day 9.30am-4pm Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**

#### **Lot 7 Ironbark Rd Rowsley Melways 7B5**

Grow West have conducted community planting days in the Bacchus Marsh area for the past 10 years in partnership with VNPA, local landholders and the Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee. The event has an excellent reputation and plant survival rates have been high (in most years at least 80%). Registration: <http://growwest.com.au>  
Closing Monday 13 Jul15 Information: <http://www.growwest.com.au/resources/docs/Community%20Planting%20Day%20Info%20Kit%202015.pdf>; Contact: Emma Muir 03 5368 7256 .0412 685 404 <[peteremma15@bigpond.com](mailto:peteremma15@bigpond.com)>

### **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> Meet at 'Big Red' beside the Western Freeway. Corner of Tamar Drive and Raymond Street, Melton South. Melway 337 Ref A12

## **OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

### **Brimbank Council to rehabilitate Upper Stony Creek concrete drain to be as a stream**

According to Brimbank City Council media advice (21 May 2015):

*'Brimbank City Council has put its support behind a transformation project that could see a section of Upper Stony Creek in Sunshine North, rehabilitated from the concrete drain which currently exists into a natural stream.*

*'Chair of Brimbank Administrators, Mr John Watson said Council was pleased to be part of the project control group for the Upper Stony Creek*

*project, which is being led by Melbourne Water and City West Water.*

*"The area in which this project is focused, from Furlong Road to Gilmore Road, is owned by Melbourne Water and currently comprises a concrete drain and very poor open space amenity," Mr Watson said.*

*"The concept design proposes a completely naturalised waterway with an associated wetland that provides treated stormwater that can be harvested for street trees and open spaces.*

*"In addition to the significant changes to the creek environment, the project proposes to establish a fantastic piece of open space alongside the creek for the local Sunshine North community to enjoy."*

*Mr Watson said the project had the potential to become a demonstration project for converting underutilised concrete waterways into a sustainable, green urban landscape that re-establishes creek ecology.*

*Other park infrastructure proposed includes a circuit path network, seating and picnic areas to view the wetland, significant tree planting and riparian planting and interpretive signage.*

*The project addresses key objectives in Brimbank's [Creating Better Parks Policy and Plan](#), [Cycling and Walking Strategy 2008](#) and [Biodiversity Strategy 2012-2022](#).*

*The project is also consistent with a key aspect of the Greening the West project that is the establishment of alternative water supplies to ensure future greening initiatives are sustainable.*

*It is expected that all capital funding for the project would be sourced from external agencies.*

*Detailed design and community consultation will be required to further develop the project.'*  
Brimbank City Council media advice (21 May 2015):  
[http://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au/News\\_and\\_Updates/Media\\_Releases\\_2015/May\\_2015/Future\\_of\\_Upper\\_Stony\\_Creek](http://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au/News_and_Updates/Media_Releases_2015/May_2015/Future_of_Upper_Stony_Creek);

*This is a very exciting & innovative proposal. City of Melton is about to rehabilitate our own Ryans Creek, where it flows into Melton Botanic Garden.*



After Ryans Creek is restored perhaps Melton could look at other local creeks that have been turned into concrete drains, if appropriate funding becomes available in the future. Arnolds Creek (East & West branches) north of High Street is a prime example.

### Crocodile in the creek at Brookfield!

The finding of a dead crocodile in Arnolds Creek at Brookfield was widely reported in the media <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/west/dead-crocodile-found-in-arnolds-creek-in-melton/story-fngnvmj7-1227350063455>;

Crocs in the creek! What next. Alligators in the undergrowth? Caimans in the cumbungi? A foretaste of rampant global warming? Not to mention the suggestion that over-zealous revegetation & environmental restoration has created a haven for man-eating reptiles?

More seriously, possibly a pet that succumbed to Melton's less than tropical conditions. Or worse, a once loved but now unwanted pet that had been dumped in the creek, to suffer a cruel death in the cold waters of Arnolds Creek.

## MELTON WILDLIFE

### Gang Gang Cockatoos at Hannah Watts



Hi all

Just a taste of what I was able to get today at Hannah Watts, three pairs!!!!

These two had been inspecting a hollow and were being harassed by not only the Rainbow Lorikeets but the other two pairs, so they decided to start digging a hole for themselves. Will try and process a few more this evening when I have a bit more time I haven't seen the

females colouring like this before, so maybe breeding colours?

Regards, Nora

### Lizard Lounges at Brookfield

No lizards in the lounge as yet but two Pobblebonk frogs have moved in under one of the tiles. Several old roof tiles have been buried in the leaf litter at Brookfield to monitor for the presence of small wildlife.

Tiles have been similarly placed in Bush's Paddock & Mt Cottrell over several years to monitor for Striped Legless Lizards. No Legless Lizards have been found to date but the tiles provide shelter for a diversity of other small wildlife. Blue-tongued Lizards, Garden Skinks, Spotted Marsh Frogs & Pobblebonks are to be found under them. Even a Little Whip Snake was found under one tile in Bush's Paddock, as well as a variety of insects, spiders & other arthropods. The tiles are a useful means of monitoring small wildlife.



Lizard Lounge (roof tile buried in leaf litter)



Pobblebonk beneath roof tile at Brookfield