



# MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2013

### CORPORATE MEMBERS

#### 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 Facebook

Check for coming MEG events on Melton Environment Group Facebook page:  
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Melton-on-Australia/Melton-Environment-Group/139259387879>;

### NEXT MEG MEETING

MEG meetings are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, at 7:30, at Don Nardella's office in Alexandra St (beside old Fire Station). MEG's next meeting will be Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August.

### KABV 2013

#### Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria / Sustainable Cities

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July, Carmen & Daryl represented MEG at the Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria / Sustainable Cities environmental awards presentation. Three environmental awards went to Melton.

### MEG: Protection of the Environment Award *Biolinks, birds & blogging about grassy woodland*

'Melton Environment Group has worked on the Arnolds Creek Bio-link since 2008, protecting & enhancing the native grasslands and woodlands that are abundant in birdlife. To assist with a shortage of nesting hollows, the group obtained funding to erect nest boxes in the creek area. Recently the focus has been on revegetation, weed control, litter clean ups and bird surveying. Prior to planting, MEG negotiated with the Wurundjeri Council to ensure Aboriginal heritage was respected. Members collect seeds which are delivered to the Dame Phyllis Frost horticulture program where they are propagated and then returned to MEG for re-planting, facilitating the regrowth of indigenous species.

'To encompass the wider community MEG conduct wildflower walks in the grey box forest located at the headwaters of the stream. A bird watching group was formed in 2012 and they stay in touch through their blog - Nature out West, inviting other wild life watchers to share in their observations'



Cr Sophie Ramsay, Carmen, Daryl, Linda Bradburn, Cr Bob Turner

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

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



Category Winner

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria  
Sustainable Cities Awards 2013

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



### **FMBG: Community Action & Leadership Growing plants, growing people**

*'Friends of the Melton Botanic Gardens was formed in 2003 to enhance the appearance of Ryan's Creek through the establishment of a low-rainfall botanic garden. Melton City Council funded a feasibility study in 2003, a landscape plan in 2006 and further detailed plans in 2008. Indigenous revegetation of the creek commenced the same year with assistance from Melbourne Water and Melton City Council. The Eucalyptus Arboretum began on the 24 hectare site in 2011 with over 600 eucalypts and 22,000 companion plantings. Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden have a clear strategic plan and a partnership with council via a Memorandum of Understanding. The group is proactive, building links with business, government and the community in order to achieve their plans. A newsletter, website, social media and regular meetings keep the 200 members and others in contact about all activities.'*

Congratulations to FMBG!

### **Linda Bradburn: Dame Phyllis Frost Award**

Linda Bradburn is Environmental Educator for Melton City Council.

*'With a passion for protecting and enhancing the environment and with skills to educate the community to become stewards of the environment, Linda Bradburn has worked in health and local government for the past 25 years.*

*Initially working in the health sector educating staff on environmental sustainability, Linda initiated programs to reduce waste and increase recycling, and improve environmental outcomes. At Austin Health, Linda implemented a program that involved working with unemployed people creating a wetlands area with storm water run-off. Linda is currently employed as an Environmental Educator at Melton City Council. The role provides the opportunity to engage with students, community groups and community members assisting them to understand and improve the local environment and general sustainability. Linda participates with members of the Melton environmental community to showcase the beautiful and unique natural features of the western basalt plains. Linda's enthusiasm and passion for her work with the community is visible daily whether it be talking to Friends groups members or providing environmental education classes to local primary school students. Linda has been active in many environmental and sustainability community groups and is well respected by her peers and the community. She is known for her diligent, friendly and committed approach to protecting, enhancing and showcasing the Melton environment'*

Congratulations to Linda from us all!



President: Daryl Akers  
Secretary: Doug Godsll  
Meetings:

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

email: darylakers@gmail.com  
Facebook: Melton Environment Group

## MEG EVENTS IN JULY

### Brookfield

On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June Daryl of MEG met Linda Bradburn (Melton Environmental Education Officer) & Barry of Village Lifestyle Village about planting on the new site. Linda & Daryl marked out a large planting site to begin the project. Shortly afterward Peter Sell sprayed the site to remove competition from weeds. This should effectively act as both a windbreak & a sound barrier between the village & the freeway. Arnolds Creek can be something of a wind tunnel in high northerly winds, thereby drying out the plants we have planted in years past.



Linda & Barry inspecting future planting site



New Brookfield planting site (freshly sprayed)

### Birdwalk in Toolern Regional Park

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July MEG hosted a bird walk in Toolern Regional Park. The morning was cold & grey but Geraldine, Brian, Nora & Daryl of MEG braved the bleak weather. Despite the weather Nora predicted that prospects of seeing birds were good; as after two days of wet, stormy weather, the birds may take advantage of the fine morning

to come out for a feed. Nora's observation proved correct as we saw a total of 21 bird species in the short time we were there (out of the total of 71 bird species recorded here).



Geraldine, Brian & Daryl at Toolern Creek Park

#### Birds seen included:

White Cockatoo	Galah
Eastern Rosella	Red-rumped Parrot
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Rainbow Lorikeet
Black Duck	Wood Duck
Little Raven	Magpie
Willy Wagtail	Golden Whistler
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Superb Fairy-wren
Red-browed Finch	Zebra Finch
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	House Sparrow
Striated Pardalote	Starling
White-plumed Honeyeater	



Birdwatching in the rain at Toolern Park

Due to the wet grass we kept to the concrete walkway. The walkway extends through the entire length of the park, from Bridge road in Melton South to Strathulloh Woodland, however after a few hundred metres we decided to call the walk

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short as the rain returned. Raptors are such as Wedge-tailed Eagles, harriers, Brown Falcons & Black-shouldered Kites are commonly seen here but raptors were noticeably absent on the day. Despite the short duration of the walk & the wet conditions, we were surprised at the diversity of bird species seen.



Remains of old cobblestone track in Toolern Park

The remnants of an old cobblestone track could be seen beside the concrete walkway. Much of this has gone but perhaps what remains may be of heritage value.

### Planet Ark National Tree Day



Planting beside Western Freeway

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July MEG participated in Planet Ark National Treeday activity at Brookfield. 25 people planted about 400 plants. One initial 'island' beside the freeway on-ramp had been prepared several weeks prior to planting, to prevent competition from weeds. As this planting was such a success we may be able to return here to plant another such 'island'. MEG's KABV Protection of the Environment Award was given its first public display, to the group!

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200 holes were dug several days prior to planting, to enable more time-effective planting. 10 trees were planted, complemented with about 200 understory plants. Trees could include Yellow Box & a couple of Blue Box. Understory plants such as Senna, Eutaxia (bush pea) & local wattles, (Gold-dust, Golden & Prickly Moses Wattles) as well as local wildflowers (Bulbine Lilies, Indigofera, Running Postman, Sticky Everlastings, Basalt Daisy, Pelargonium & Pimelia should ensure both biodiversity & a colourful splash of different colours.



Morning tea beside Arnolds Creek

However, we soon had all the plants planted, so we had to fetch more plants! We soon filled the 'island' & moved on to another site to continue planting. We planted these beside Arnolds creek at the site we had planted two years ago, complementing the original plantings with additional understory plants. Our efforts were rewarded were by a welcome shower of rain later that day (although a good downpour would have been even more welcome).

Hot & cold drinks were supplied by MEG, as well as refreshments that were funded by City of Melton. Many thanks to City of Melton.

### Biodiversity at Brookfield: Lizard Lounges

Several old roof tiles have been placed on the ground beneath the understory we have planted among the remnant Grey Box trees at Brookfield. These have been covered with mulch to enhance their insulation value; & also prevent their appearing unsightly.

This has been inspired by monitoring projects in some nature reserves around Melton whereby tiles have been placed on the ground as a means of

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monitoring for the presence of Legless Lizards. It has been observed that these tiles, as well as other debris in paddocks around Melton become home for a variety of small wildlife. These include Blue-tongued Lizards, small skinks, frogs, & a large variety of invertebrates



Roof tile concealed beneath Fragrant Saltbush

Although invisible to the casual observer these will hopefully enhance the wildlife habitat value of the sites we are revegetating. These 'lizard lounges' should also provide a means of monitoring the return of otherwise cryptic wildlife to Brookfield.

#### **Biodiversity at Brookfield: Case Moths ;**



Saunders Case Moth cocoons

Recently about 20 Saunders Case Moth (aka Bagmoths) cocoons were placed in trees at Brookfield. These moths, taken from a nearby garden, should add to the biodiversity at Brookfield. As our trees & shrubs grow our insect diversity should correspondingly increase also.

Apparently ravens are predators of these insects although their cocoons made from sticks over a silken base should protect them from many smaller birds. Female moths spend their lives in the stick-covered cocoons. Their flightless nature limits their chances for dispersal, even over short distances, so their return to Brookfield may need some assistance. Details on:

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/discovery-centre-news/2009-archive/case-moths/>

### **COMING MEG EVENTS**

#### **Planting at Brookfield**

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August 10.00 – 12.00**

Planting at Brookfield, at Arnolds Creek in Black Dog Drive. 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 child friendly, with no steep slopes. Melways Map 336 Ref G11.

#### **Birdwalk in Melton Gilgai Woodland**

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August 9.00 – 11.00**

On Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August Melton Environment Group will host a bird walk in Melton Gilgai Woodland in Harkness Road. This is remnant Grey Box/Yellow Gum woodland, managed by Melton Shire, only a few hundred metres from Long Forest Mallee, with which it shares many bird species. 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 about 1 km, on the right. Melway 330 Ref B11

#### **Wattle Day**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September**

MEG will be participating in Wattle Day by planting wattles at Brookfield on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September. Hot & cold drinks, & refreshments supplied.

### **MEG BIRDWATCHING WALKS**

Melton Gilgai Woodland	Saturday 31 <sup>st</sup> August
Pyrete Forest	Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> September
Long Forest Mallee	Saturday 26 <sup>th</sup> October
Hannah Watts Park	Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> November

Bird watching beginners who have had no prior involvement in serious bird watching are invited to MEG bird walks, although all birdwatchers are invited to participate. All sites are easy walking, with no bushwalking involved. When our long awaited website is operational Melton bird records will be placed here.

### MEG PLANTING DAYS

Treeplanting Day                      Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July  
 Planting at Brookfield                Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August  
 Wattle Day tree planting            Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September  
*All events are at Brookfield unless stated*

### OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

#### PLEG planting at Yaloak Escarpment



Frances, Irene & Yvonne planting on escarpment

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July Frances, Irene, Yvonne & Daryl planted a number of Rock Correas on Yaloak Escarpment, the rocky escarpment overlooking at Pinkerton Flat beside the Werribee River, adjacent to Western Water's treatment plant at Surbiton Park. The group took advantage of a sunny winter day with brilliant blue skies (at least for the early morning!) the group also planted Poas in the two rabbit-proof islands & on also the edge of the flood plain beside the Werribee River; replacing those plants lost during the extremely dry Spring /Summer /Autumn of 2012/3 (described by the Climate Commission as 'The Angry Summer' <http://climatecommission.gov.au/report/the-angry-summer/>;) Many thanks to Ryan of Western Water for towing the water tank to the planting site.

### COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

#### Wattle Day September 1<sup>st</sup>

Wattle Day is celebrated on September 1<sup>st</sup>, the first day of Spring. Noted ornithologist & early Field

Naturalists Club of Victoria member A J Campbell, founded the 'Wattle Club' & advocated the creation of a 'Wattle Day' to commemorate these most well known of Australian flowers; & as a celebration of Australia. Wattle Day is a fitting day for environmentalists, especially local ones, to celebrate. A J Campbell founded a Wattle Club in Victoria in 1899 to promote a Wattle Day demonstration every September to encourage recognition of the flower as a symbol of patriotism. In 1908 he delivered a lecture entitled 'Wattle Time; or Yellow-haired September' in which he stated that 'by numbers, the Wattle is almost exclusively Australian, and should undoubtedly be our National Flower'.

Melton has a long historic connection with Wattle Day. A J Campbell was a member of the Pinkerton family, early settlers at Melton. Their property was beside the Werribee River, where Western Water's treatment plant stands today. It is still known today as Pinkerton Forest. His interest in birds & natural history was no doubt fuelled by many visits to Pinkerton Forest & the nearby Werribee River.

According to Wikipedia: *'the first recognised use of wattle as a symbol of the first day of spring was the formation in 1899 of a 'Wattle Club' in Victoria by Mr A. J. Campbell, a field naturalist. For several years the club organised bush outings on the first day in September. The first suggestion of a Wattle Day was made by Mr Campbell during a speech in September 1908.'*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wattle\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wattle_Day);

There are almost 1000 species of Wattle in Australia. The Golden Wattle possible our best known native flower, is the official floral emblem of Australia; & our national colours are green & gold, reminiscent of wattle trees. The Golden Wattle is the floral symbol of Australia. Details of Wattle Day can be seen on: <http://wattleday.com/>;

#### Friends of Brisbane Ranges Wildflower Show

9.30am - 4.30pm Sunday 13 October 2013

Anakie Hall, Staughton Vale Rd, Anakie  
 Wildflower displays, bus tours, workshops, environmental stalls, photographic display, native plants, cards, books. Further information & online bus bookings:

<http://www.fobr.org.au/wildflowershow>; 0438 945 399 <[friends\\_br@yahoo.com.au](mailto:friends_br@yahoo.com.au)>;

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## FoTC Platypus Festival

**Saturday October 12<sup>th</sup> October 12.00–4.00**

Friends of Toolern Creek will be holding their 5<sup>th</sup> Platypus Festival this year. Local environmental & garden groups, including MEG will be participating.

The Platypus Festival offers the community has a chance to learn why our waterways are so important, how we can all play a part in taking care of it & how we can all make a difference. The Platypus Festival is the leading environmental festival in the western region. This year Western Land Services are a major sponsor

## Federation Day Walk Sunday 13 October 2013

**Central hub: Myrniong, near Bacchus Marsh.**

Boroondara Bushwalkers will host the 2013 Federation Day in the spectacular western gorges area northwest of Melbourne: Lerderderg and Werribee Gorge State Parks, Brisbane Ranges National Park and the Wombat State Forest. They are offering more than 20 walks, ranging from Easy to Medium Hard. Information:

<http://www.boroondarabushwalkers.org.au/>

## PLEG Open Day at Bush's Paddock October

Pinkerton Landcare & Environmental Group will hold a family open day at Bush's Paddock. Details TBA

## PLEG Environmental Art Exhibition

**Melton Information Centre February 2014**

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group will hold an Environmental Art Exhibition in February 2014, with a focus on our local natural environment. The art exhibition will be part of the Sustainable Living Festival, Australia's largest and oldest sustainability festival. The exhibition will be a celebration of our local wildlife, wildflowers, scenes and nature in all sizes shapes and forms. The medium can be by paintings, drawings & photographs. Themes may include: wildlife, local landscapes: ie. Grasslands & Grassy Woodlands. Further details TBA

## OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

### App for Walking and Cycling in Melton

Free digital maps, showing walking and cycling paths for both Melton and Caroline Springs, are now available for download on iPhone, iPad and Android devices. Melton City Council developed the App and has installed 87 shared path signs across the City. Walkers can simply scan the QR

codes located on the signs to load the maps. A hard copy version of the maps is also available. The maps highlight the shared path networks around the City and include destinations and landmarks, walking and cycling routes, public toilets, playgrounds, BBQs, services and amenities.

[http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Home/News/Get\\_App\\_for\\_Walking\\_and\\_Cycling\\_in\\_Melton;](http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Home/News/Get_App_for_Walking_and_Cycling_in_Melton;)

### MEG member on TV: 15<sup>th</sup> August 4pm

Richard Akers of Melbourne Water (& MEG member) will be on TV Channel 10 on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> August at 4pm:

*'Join me for the screening of my latest work - Scope on Channel 10, Thursday the 15th of August at 4pm where you'll see me with amazing wildlife like a very fat southern brown treefrog and a bunch of grade 5's in a swamp!'*

## NATURE OUT WEST

NatureoutWest is a blog that has been created to highlight the beauty & diversity of Melton's flora & fauna, as well as its more spectacular landscape. Everyone is invited to contribute or add photos of our native wildlife & vegetation.

[http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/;](http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/)

Another wildlife site onto which wildlife photos may be downloaded is Naturescreatures, on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Naturescreature/?fref=ts;>

## ODD SPOT

### Moe: trees make way for McDonalds sign

According to Latrobe Valley Express (July 18<sup>th</sup> 2013): *'McDonald's Moe was given permission to remove trees near its Princes Freeway premises'*. It appears that Latrobe City Council has given approval for several trees to be removed, to prevent them obscuring a McDonalds fast food store near Moe.

Although a council officer's report had not recommended Latrobe City authorise the removal of the trees, this was overruled by council. *Latrobe Valley Express Thursday July 18<sup>th</sup> 2013,* [http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/1552251/mcdonalds-trees-to-go/;](http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/1552251/mcdonalds-trees-to-go/) Strange days indeed!

## MELTON WILDLIFE

### Goannas in Melton



Goanna found by Peter Sell at Toolern Creek 2008

Last summer local Parwan resident David Marnie reported: *'spotted a goanna...lace monitor?? at our front drive Parwan Exford Rd.....not sure if it is an unusual local, dumped or pet escape'*

Two Lace Goannas (*Varanus varius*) have been seen & photographed in Melton in the past few years. Peter Sell of Western Land Services photographed one beside Toolern Creek in 2008. This goanna had broad bands & was considered typical of those found in NSW, strongly suggesting that this was an escaped (or released) pet. Another was photographed in Harkness Road in 2009 in Melton South, in a newly built housing estate. Expert opinion was that goannas are not locally native & that they were probably dumped.



Goanna in Clarkes Road Melton South in 2009

Frances Overmars of Mt Cottrell observes: *'I wonder if this is the same reptile which was spotted on Mt. Cottrell about 5 years ago. More recently (last year) a neighbour in Gard Road who breeds small birds reported a large lizard on his 4ha property. Perhaps it is the same lizard?? Interesting,'*

According to Museum Victoria:

*'It is quite common from far East Gippsland through to the Healesville area, and along the Murray river system and lakes of north western Victoria. It lives in holes in trees'*.

[http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/info/sheets/lizards-found-in-victoria/tree-goanna/;](http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/info/sheets/lizards-found-in-victoria/tree-goanna/)

However, *'The Mallee at the Back Door'* written by Friends of Long Forest Mallee lists goannas among the wildlife there, so who knows what is waiting to be found in the bush here.

### Cattle Egret at Surbiton Park



Cattle Egret at Surbiton Park

This Cattle Egret was observed in a paddock at Western Water Treatment Plant recently. The single Cattle Egret was feeding in a line with about 10 White-faced Herons, making it easy to make a size estimate! As they moved through the paddock it made sure it kept up with the line, even running if it fell behind or out of step.

