



# MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 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-Australia/Melton-Environment-Group/139259387879>;

### NEXT MEG MEETING

MEG's next meeting will be Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September. 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).

There will be no October meeting due to MEG members on holidays.

### MEG EVENTS IN AUGUST

#### Welcome to new members from Brookfield

MEG is happy to welcome 8 new members from Brookfield Village Retirement Home; Bev Dutton, Bruce Harris, John & Lois Brewis, John Dunn, Alan Merlo, Val Thomson, & Ron Chalmers. Bev & Bruce have both been active in helping organise

planting at the new site between the lane & the freeway. The others helped plant at our first planting here on Planet Ark National Treeday on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July. A total of 25 people planted about 400 plants. Over the next few years, in partnership with Brookfield residents, we hope to transform this somewhat barren windswept site into both habitat for wildlife & pleasant parkland.

### KABV Sustainability Awards: Friday 27th July More photos



Melton Environment Group



Friends of Melton Botanic Garden

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)



Linda Bradburn: "Dame Phyllis Frost Award"



Melton nominees for KABV awards

### Dame Phyllis Frost Centre Project

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> August MEG took delivery of about 600 plants from the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre.

Seeds from local indigenous plants are collected by local environmental groups & forwarded to the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre where they are germinated and grown by women in the Centre under the direction of teacher Judy Allen (of Kangan Institute) and Helen Scott (Dept of Corrections). The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre has initiated an innovative project for growing native plants for the purposes of restoration of the natural environment as part of a horticulture course under the Kangan Institute.

The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre has supplied plants to several local environment groups for restoration of the local natural environment. These plants will be planted at Arnolds Creek, as part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project. This project is a partnership between Melton Environment Group, City of Melton, Melbourne Water & residents of

Brookfield Lifestyle Retirement Village; and aims to create a wildlife corridor along Arnolds Creek, through Melton.

Many thanks to Judy Allen, Helen Scott and the women of the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. Hopefully skills & qualifications learned here should help the women find careers later in their lives.

Plants included:

Achaena novaezealandiae	200	Stipa scabra	200
Wahlenbergia communis	25	Buloke	70
Atriplex semibaccata	100		

### Planting at Brookfield



Geraldine planting Poas at Brookfield

On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August MEG planted at Brookfield, beside Black Dog Drive, at Arnolds Creek beside Brookfield Village. Despite the icy wind eleven people participated, including Flo, Geraldine, Peter & Daryl of MEG, as well as several visitors.

At the suggestion of MEG's Environmental Advisor Peter Sell, we concentrated mainly on planting masses of Tussock Grass (*Poa labilliere*), grown by the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, in the flood prone area where the storm drain joins the creek. We (& Melbourne Water) have already planted several hundred damp-tolerant hushes & trees at this site (Red Gum, Blue Box, River Bottlebrush, Woolly Teatree & Acacia provincialis).

We planted:		Poa lab	1000
Prickly Moses Wattle	15	Melicytis	250
Bursaria	15	Lignum	5
Lomandra micrantha	20		

President: Daryl Akers  
Secretary: Doug Godsil  
Meetings:

Phone: 0438 277 252  
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email: darylakers@gmail.com  
Facebook: Melton Environment Group

3rd Wednesday of the month at Don Nardella's office in Alex&ra St (beside old Fire Station) at 7:30

We didn't see many birds while we were planting, no doubt due to the blustery conditions. We still managed to see (& hear) Red Wattlebirds, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Willy Wagtails (these always follow us hoping that we will uncover food for them) Magpies, Ravens Red-rumped Parrots & Eastern Rosellas. A Black-shouldered Kite dropped into the long grass about 30 metres from where we were planting. It remained hidden in the grass for several minutes before flying off. It must have caught something & eaten it on the ground before flying away.



Morning tea at Brookfield

### Brookfields residents working bee



On Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August Bev Dutton of Brookfield organised a working bee of Brookfield village residents to spread mulch over the plants we planted on Planet Ark Treeplanting Day. City of Melton has supplied a large pile of mulch for this purpose. Brookfield Lifestyle Village supplied two workers as well as a golf cart & trailer to assist in moving the mulch to the planting site.

Unfortunately high northerly winds caused us to abandon the mulching project on OH&S reasons.

On our major working bee spreading mulch in January 2010 we learned a valuable lesson about spreading mulch in high winds. In 2010 mulch & dust swirled all around as we shovelled & forked. Clouds of mulch billowed about us & even wearing glasses & protective eyewear did not effectively guard our eyes against the flying mulch.

At Bev's suggestion, we collected old stakes from beside Arnolds Creek from previous plantings. We used these to stake the young trees to brace them from the prevailing northerly winds.

We will organise another working bee to spread the mulch, under more friendly weather conditions. Mulching the plants will greatly enhance their survivability over the dry summer months.

### Birdwalk in Melton Gilgai Woodland



On Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August 13 people participated in a bird walk in Melton Gilgai Woodland in Harkness Road, hosted by MEG. Although it was the last day of winter, it was a beautiful spring day, with blue skies & warm sunshine. Flo, Geraldine, Brian, Daryl & Nora of MEG were joined by Josephine, a family from St Albans & three ladies from Williamstown. Melton Gilgai is remnant Grey Box/Yellow Gum woodland, managed by City of Melton, only a few hundred metres from Long Forest Mallee, with which it shares many bird species. We saw 16 bird species (of a total of 71 bird species have been observed here to date). We saw the large mob of over 100 kangaroos that lives here, as they moved out of the woodland at our approach. However, they remained a short distance from the trees, watching our progress; no doubt waiting for us to leave.

We saw 18 bird species including:

Black Faced Cuckoo-shrike	Magpie
White-plumed Honeyeater	Raven
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Chough
Dusky Woodswallow	Noisy Miner
Red Wattlebird	Magpie-lark
Pied Currawong	Willy Wagtail
Jacky Winter	Galah
Eastern Rosella	Crimson Rosella
Common Bronzewing	Crested Pigeon

Unfortunately we were a few weeks early to see the springtime wildflower spectacular, as they are late this year. However, we still saw many wildflowers, including purple Indigofera, Gold-dust Wattle, a few bushpeas (yellow *Eutaxia diffusa* & orange *Eutaxia microphylla*), mauve New Holland Daisies, blue *Wahlenbergias*, pink Pigface & pale yellow Clematis. Later in September we should see a spectacular array of bushpeas here (*Eutaxia* & *Templetonia*).

### COMING MEG EVENTS

**Planting at Brookfield Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September**  
MEG will be planting at Brookfield on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September. (Not Wattle Day, as previously stated, as this conflicts with Fathers Day!) Hot & cold drinks & refreshments supplied.

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 at Eynesbury Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September (not Pyrete Forest, as per previous info)**

There will be a birdwalk at Eynesbury, around the ornamental lake to the historic shearing shed & back, along the gravel walking track (no bush walking required). Possibly finish at the bluestone cafe for snacks. We should see a variety of both wetland & woodland birds. We should also see a spectacular array of wildflowers, including wattles & bush peas. Please wear long trousers, sturdy shoes, wet-weather gear & bring sun protection & a bottle of water. Meet in the carpark beside the ornamental lake. Melway 226 Ref H 2. MEG birdwalk details on:

<http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/>;

### MEG BIRDWATCHERS

#### Birdwatching Walks in Melton

Eynesbury 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 birdwalk details are on: <http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/>;

### OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

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

Wattle Day is celebrated by environmentalists in Australia on September 1<sup>st</sup>, the first day of Spring. 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. Melton has a long historic connection with Wattle Day. A J Campbell was a member of the Pinkerton family; early settlers at Melton. His interest in birds & natural history was no doubt fuelled by many visits to Pinkerton Forest & the nearby Werribee River. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wattle\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wattle_Day);

#### PLEG burning boxthorns in Pinkerton Forest

In August Frances, Irene & Daryl of PLEG stacked dead boxthorns onto piles for burning. The bulk of the dead boxthorns were burned to prevent their becoming rabbit habitat, although some small piles are left to offer protection to small vulnerable birds such as Blue Wrens. Removing boxthorns is a recurring task when managing native woodland. Their tasty, succulent berries are attractive to a variety of wildlife, especially birds. Foxes & large lizards are also fond of them. The ripe berries taste somewhat similar to sweet tomatoes! Blue-tongued Lizards & Cunninghams Skinks are fond of the berries but are unlikely to spread the seeds over long distances. If ripe berries are dropped onto rock ledges below escarpments, Cunninghams Skinks often emerge to eat them. Birds appear to be the main vectors responsible for spreading these noxious weeds. The first areas boxthorns re-infest are beneath tree canopies, clear evidence indicating that birds are the major

vectors. Despite constant removal, boxthorn seeds are continually brought in by birds from outside areas of infestation, making their removal a constantly recurring job.



Irene feeding the flames in Pinkerton Forest

### **Birdlife Australia: Pinkerton & Eynesbury**

On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> August Birdlife Australia hosted a bird watching walk in Pinkerton Forest, Bush's Paddock woodland & Eynesbury Forest, led by BLA's Dave Torr.

Dave writes: *'Very blustery conditions which made birding hard. Nothing new but good numbers of Zebra finch at Pinkerton and Diamond Firetails and Brown Treecreepers at Eynesbury'*

A total of 60 bird species were seen:

Pinkerton Forest	40	Bush's Paddock	15
Surbiton Park	4	Eynesbury Forest	49

### **COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS**

#### **Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group Western Water, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 7.30 pm**

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group's (PLEG) next meeting will be on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Fiona Halse (Melton Information Centre) will discuss the proposed PLEG Art Show in February 2014. PLEG will also discuss proposals for a name change for Bush's Paddock.

PLEG meetings are held at Western Water Recycle Plant, at 7.30 pm

- From Melton go south along Exford Road.
- Turn left (east) into Greigs Rd, up the hill toward Strathulloh.
- Turn right (south) into Butlers Rd, through gate into Surbiton Park (Western Water Treatment Plant)

- Melways Edition 35 (2008) Map 221 Ref C4

### **Bushcare's Major Day Out - Bush's Paddock Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September 9.00 – 1.00**

PLEG will be participating in Bushcare's Major Day Out at Bush's Paddock. This event will be partly hands on & partly an opportunity to enjoy a local native grassland. We will be planting endangered Showy Podolepis as the hands on component of the event. This will be followed by a wildflower walk.

We should enjoy an impressive display of grassland wildflowers, including two Ptilotis species P. Spathulatus & P. Macrocephalus (Featherheads). There should be native Erodium as well as a few other wildflowers on display. We plan to meet at 9am at entrance, plant Podolepis (endangered wildflowers in Victoria), have morning tea break, followed by an early spring wildflower walk. Participants can bring a magnifying glass, binoculars, butterfly net and wear sturdy shoes. Headgear, long sleeves & BYO water if it is a hot day. Info on:

<http://www.bushcaresmajordayout.org/location/bushs-paddock>; Melway Map 221 Ref H5

### **FMBG: Guest speaker Beth Gott Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 7.30 pm**

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden (FMBG) invite you to join Beth Gott, renowned speaker & author of *'Koorie Plants Koorie People'*. Come to our meeting Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 7.30 pm DJ Cunningham Centre, Exford Road, Melton South. All welcome, supper provided. For info contact John or Jill Bentley 9743 3819

### **Botanic Garden Open Day Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September 11am-3pm**

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden invite you to the Botanic Garden Open Day 'The Biggest 10th Anniversary Event of the Year'

- See the Botanic Garden developments
- Revegetation of Basalt Plains Plants
- Visit the depot & nursery
- Music in the garden: Melton Wind Symphony
- Plants for sale
- Sausage sizzle
- Guided tour
- Children's activities
- Lakeside plantings

Melton Botanic Garden: corner of Tullidge & William Streets, Melways Map 337 Ref: C10 & D10

President: Daryl Akers  
Secretary: Doug Godsil  
Meetings:

Phone: 0438 277 252  
Environmental Advisor: Peter Sell  
3<sup>rd</sup> 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

For more details contact Jill: 9743 3819,  
[www.fmbg.org.au](http://www.fmbg.org.au);

### **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)>;

### **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: Myrningong, 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>

### **Wildflower Walk in Melton Harkness Road**

**Reserve Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 10am - 12pm**

Join Bryan Roberts (Environmental Planner and  
Botanist) for a walk into Harkness Road  
Environmental Reserve and McCorkells Road  
Reserve to see the local wildflowers.

Enjoy the spring flowers of the Victorian Volcanic  
Plains with an expert guide. Please wear long  
trousers, sturdy shoes, wet-weather gear & bring  
sun protection & a bottle of water. This grey box  
and yellow gum woodland has a good bird  
population & often a resident mob of kangaroos.

**RSVP essential:** Bryan Roberts, email:  
[Bryanr@melton.vic.gov.au](mailto:Bryanr@melton.vic.gov.au); 9747 5407 or mobile  
0400 726 887

### **Family Nature Day: Bushs Paddock Grassland Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 10.30am - 2pm**

Spring has Sprung! A day for the whole family to  
enjoy!

*Includes:*

- Family picnic (BYO)
- Childrens' activities
- Cook your own damper (and eat it!)
- Nature walks
- Wildflowers
- Craft activities
- Build your own bird nest
- BYO picnic lunch & a mug for morning tea!

Supported by the Pinkerton Landcare &  
Environment Group, [Melton City Council](http://www.meltoncity.vic.gov.au) &  
Western Water. Meet at Bushs Paddock,  
Grassland, Mt. Cottrell Rd, entry via the Pinkerton  
Forest gate on Mt Cottrell Road. Melway Map 221  
Ref H7.

For details contact: Daryl Akers Phone: 0438 277  
252 email: [darylakers@gmail.com.au](mailto:darylakers@gmail.com.au); or Frances  
Overmars 9748 1294 or [www.pinkertonforest.com](http://www.pinkertonforest.com);

### **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**

**Victorian Volcanic Plains CMN**

**Common Cents Challenge for Bandicoots**

The Victorian Volcanic Plains CMN writes:  
The Common Cents Challenge is an on-going  
initiative aimed at raising awareness & money for  
the Eastern Barred Bandicoot programs at Zoos  
Victoria. The aim is for people to collect wither 200  
five cent or 90 two dollars coins to support the  
work of Zoos Victoria. The initiative is aimed at  
schools but work places may like to get involved

as well. Details on:

<http://www.zoo.org.au/loveyourlocals/common-cents-challenge>

## OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

### Melton Seniors Festival 2<sup>nd</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> October

Darren Cunningham of City of Melton writes: *'The 2013 Victorian Seniors Festival offers hundreds of events across the State to celebrate ageing-well and we are delighted to offer a fantastic array of activities and events across the City of Melton (2-13 Oct) as well.'*

Two ticketed events:

- \* Seniors Dinner Dance &
- \* Morning Melodies Concert.

Tickets for these events on sale now from the Melton Visitor Information Centre, 323 High St, Melton. We will also be making regular updates about our celebrations to our webpage:

[www.melton.vic.gov.au/seniorsfestival](http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/seniorsfestival); If you're on Facebook, so are we now. Check out our page at: [www.facebook.com/meltonseniorsfestival2013](http://www.facebook.com/meltonseniorsfestival2013); '

## NATURE OUT WEST

Nature out West 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/>;

## ODD SPOT

### Frog pond in kitty litter tray

During several days of extended stormy wet weather in late July a frog began calling from a Melton South backyard. The 'creek creek creek' call identified it as an Eastern Common Froglet, The calls were eventually tracked to a plastic kitty litter tray filled with rainwater, in which plant seedlings had been placed during summer to prevent their drying out in summer heat. Small rushes in a tube had spread into the tray, thereby accidentally forming a miniature frog pond. The tray is set among many assorted trays & plastic boxes filled with tubes of indigenous plants awaiting planting beside Arnolds Creek. The frog must have taken advantage of the wet stormy weather to make the long trek to a new home. Many frogs must make similar adventurous trips in search of new homes, probably not all successfully. Presumably there must be ample cover & food to

support at least one frog. The presence of this calling frog demonstrates that providing habitat for these not very demanding frogs is not difficult.



Accidental frog pond in kitty litter tray

## HUMMINGBIRDS IN ECUADOR

Some photos of hummingbirds taken by Richard Akers of MEG in Ecuador recently. They are like tiny feathered jewels. Even the brightly coloured hummingbird feeder is impressive!



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### MELTON WILDLIFE

#### Death of a Crow

Beside a major Melton street recently there was a dead Crow (aka Little Raven) lying in the gutter, no doubt killed by passing traffic. Over the next few months of Spring this will be a common sight as many juvenile birds (& other wildlife) fall victim to vehicles. However, another Crow was standing beside the body, pulling at its wing, looking as though it were trying to pull its mate from the roadway. Amazing birds, Crows!