



MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 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 WEBSITE

MEG's website is now live online! The website was funded by a City of Melton Environment Day grant & has been created by webmaster Helen Snee. Helen has done a magnificent job creating a beautiful web page. You can find us online at: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au/>;

NEXT MEG MEETING

There will be no October meeting due to several MEG members on holidays. MEG's next meeting will be Wednesday 20th November.

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 AGM

MEG's AGM was held at our meeting on 18th September. Executive members were re-elected:

President:	Daryl Akers
Secretary / Treasurer:	Doug Godsil
Environmental Advisor:	Peter Sell

SPRING 2013

The arrival of spring was heralded by the call of a lone Pobblebonk on the second day of Spring, at the entrance of Toolern Regional Park. It was accompanied by a noisy chorus of Spotted Marsh Frogs. A Pallid Cuckoo was heard in Bush's Paddock a week later. The call of the Pallid Cuckoo is regarded in the countryside as a sign that spring has arrived. The last days of winter & the first days of spring were sunny & warm, making it necessary to water plants at Brookfield in early September. Late September however gave us both wind & rain. Spring has lived up to its reputation for tempestuous weather!

MEG EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

Planting at Brookfield Saturday 14th September



Morning tea at Brookfield

On Saturday 14th September Carmen, Geraldine, Jenny & Daryl of MEG met at Brookfield where we planted almost 100 shrubs, ground covers & wildflowers, including:

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

Woolly Teatree	River Bottlebrush
Prickly Moses Wattle	Gold-dust Wattle
Varnish Wattle	Bursaria
Atriplex semibaccata	Melicytus
Fragrant Saltbush	Bidgee Widgee
Showy Podolepis	Eutaxia diffusa
Indigofera	Turkey Bush
Wahlenbergia	Linum
Everlasting Daisy (<i>Chrysocephalus semipapposum</i> & <i>C. apiculatum</i>)	

We created a small extension to the central 'island' identified last year by Peter as suitable for planting. The prickly nature of many of these shrubs should ensure this will be a haven for small birds in a few years. At a later date we will protect these plantings with mulch. After planting we enjoyed morning tea in the sun among the gumtrees.



The soil was quite dry when we planted so watering seemed inevitable over the following week. But substantial rain over several days during the week saved us from watering both Brookfield sites (both sides of the lane).

Bunnings Spring Festival

On Saturday 21st September Bunnings invited Melton's community volunteer groups to their Spring Festival! Geraldine, Jenny, Doug & Daryl represented MEG at the festival. MEG participated as well as other many other local community groups including: Friends of Toolern Creek, Friends of Melton Botanic Garden, Bacchus Marsh Poultry association, CWA, Melton Owls, Melton Garden Club & Zonta. It provided an opportunity to meet other environmental & community groups

We took the opportunity to compile a 'wish list' of equipment for our next grant application! Many thanks to Bunnings for the opportunity for Melton's volunteer groups to display themselves to the community.



Doug, Geraldine & Jenny at Bunnings

Birdwalk at Eynesbury



On Saturday 28th September MEG hosted a bird walk at Eynesbury, led by Geraldine Kelly. Despite the windy conditions seven people participated, including four new people. These included Eynesbury residents Margaret, Greg, & Chris, & Gill from Caroline Springs.

Geraldine writes:

'We had a lovely day yesterday even though it was very windy but it did stay dry.'

We first went across the road from the Information Centre to the oval where Nora said we might find lots of Diamond Firetails which we did. There were two large flocks on the oval. Mixed in with them were House Sparrows & Red-rumped Parrots.

Above flew a Brown Falcon which was a good start. From there we crossed back over the road and went down the Information Centre side of the lake watching the ducks, coots and grebes bobbing on the waves whipped up by the wind & being watched by the Little Pied Cormorant on a branch over the water on the island.

We didn't venture far into the forest it was wet and muddy under foot and the time was getting away from us but we did see a Black-shouldered Kite and a Whistling Kite trying to glide over the forest, but had a losing battle with the wind.

We saw 35 different birds which was pretty good for such a windy day.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Galah
Red-rumped Parrot	Crimson Rosella
Eastern Rosella	Chestnut Teal
Wood Duck	Hardhead
Black Duck	Goose
Purple Swamphen	Eurasian Coot
Dusky Moorhen	Little Pied Cormorant
Black-shouldered Kite	Whistling Kite
Brown Falcon	Crested Pigeon
Hoary-headed Grebe	Superb Fairy Wren
Willie Wagtail	Brown Treecreeper
White-plumed Honeyeater	Red Wattlebird
Dusky Woodswallow	Magpie Lark
Magpie	Little Raven
Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike	Starling
Common Myna	House Sparrow
Diamond Firetail	Welcome Swallow
Tree Martin	



Diamond Firetail at Eynesbury



Hardhead Duck at Eynesbury Ornamental Lake.

COMING MEG EVENTS

Birdwalk in Long Forest Mallee

Saturday 26th October 9.00 – 11.00

On Saturday 26th October Melton Environment Group will host a bird walk in Long Forest Mallee (LFM). LFM is a unique Mallee remnant between Melton & Bacchus Marsh. It is the only Mallee south of the Great Dividing Range & has been isolated from the other Mallee regions in Central & Northern Victoria for about 4,000 years. Several Mallee bird species have also been isolated here also for these 4,000 years. There are isolated populations of 3 species of Mallee birds: Crested Bellbird, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill & Yellow-rumped form of Spotted Pardalote. *Birds of the Long Forest 1889 – 2005* by Marilyn Hewish, Rosemary Ward, Rohan Bugg & David Munday is a local book describing birds here. It is also an excellent book covering all local bird species.

Meet at the picnic ground in Long Forest Road From Melton drive west along High St onto the old Western Highway through Anthony's Cutting. Turn right (north) into Long Forest Road (opposite the turnoff into Hopetoun Park). Melway 335 Ref E3

Birdwalk at Hannah Watts Park

Saturday 23rd November 9.00 – 11.00

On Melton Environment Group MEG's November birdwalk will be in Hannah Watts Park. Hannah Watts Park is a popular picnic & BBQ site in Melton. It has several undercover BBQ's as well as an impressive kids' playground. Despite its familiarity, it is also home to a surprisingly impressive diversity of birdlife. Large numbers of Crested Pigeons, Red-rumped Parrots, Black & Wood Ducks are common here.. Large numbers of the smaller lorikeets (Musk & Purple-crowned)

come here in early evening to roost. The only Melton population of Noisy Miners is centred here. These are more commonly seen in Long Forest Mallee & Melton Gilgai Woodland. They are noticeably absent from other woodlands around Melton.

MEG BIRDWATCHERS

Birdwatching Walks in Melton

Long Forest Mallee Saturday 26th October
Hannah Watts Park Saturday 23rd November

Bird watching beginners who have had no prior involvement in serious bird watching are invited to MEG bird walks, although all birdwatchers (experienced or otherwise) are invited to participate. All sites are easy walking, with no bushwalking involved. Melton bird records will be placed on our website. MEG birdwalk details are on: <http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/>;

GRANTS

MEG has applied for a Western Water grant of \$2,000. This will be for ordering plants for next year, as well as website maintenance of our new website.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

Bushcare's Major Day Out - Bush's Paddock



Glenn, Frances & Irene planting Showy Podolepis

On Sunday 8th September Frances, Irene, Glenn & Daryl of PLEG celebrated Bushcare's Major Day Out at Bush's Paddock. We planted Showy Podolepis (an endangered wildflower in Victoria) as well as Dianella admixta & D. Longifolia. This was followed by morning tea in the old stockyards, beneath the Lightwood trees. As Bush's Paddock is on the slopes of Mt Cottrell we had not only the

splendid view over the native grassland, but could also admire uninterrupted views over the entire western region, including the Brisbane Ranges, You Yangs & the Great Dividing Ranges (with spectacular views toward Mt Macedon. Mt Gisborne, Mt Bullengarook, Mt Blackwood & many other mountains in the Great Dividing Range!)

Botanic Garden Open Day

On Sunday 15th September the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden invited the Melton community to a Garden Open Day to celebrate their 10th Anniversary. The event was opened by Melton Mayor Kathy Majdlik, introduced by President John Bentley while Melton MP (& founding FMBG member) Don Nardella gave a history of how the concept for local Botanic Garden began; & how the plan developed to the present day. Melton councillors Sophie Ramsey & Bob Turner also participated in celebrating the event.



John Bentley, Kathy Majdlik & Don Nardella

Over 250 people participated in the event & had the unique opportunity to see a new Botanical Garden being created! Brand new infrastructure such as new depot buildings, public toilets, & BBQ sheds, as well as massive plantings on a wide scale. The newly planted Eucalyptus Arboretum is an excellent example of the works underway here.

The Arboretum is already home to many native birds that flock here to take advantage of the extended flowering season resulting from the great diversity of eucalypts. The wetlands have long been home to a variety of waterbirds. The rushes that line Ryans Creek form valuable habitat for Latham's Snipe that rest here during their long migrations between southern Australia & northern Siberia.

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 old Fire Station) at 7:30

email: darylakers@gmail.com
Website: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au/>



Visitors at Botanic Gardens 10th Birthday

COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

Western Treatment Plant - Free Open Day Sunday 6 October 9.00 – 2.00

'You're invited to the Western Treatment Plant Open Day. Although the tours are themed, every journey includes a sticky-beak of the treatment process and uncovers how history, agriculture and biodiversity co-exist at the plant. It's choose your own adventure. Select a tour, pick a time and make a booking.'

'Some fly all the way from Siberia to visit the Western Treatment Plant (WTP) - you just have to get to Werribee. WTP is about the same size as Phillip Island so we're arranging a flock of free tours to make sure you get to see as much of the plant as our feathered friends. You're also invited to join us for activities in the Discovery Centre and a BBQ lunch.'

Western Treatment Plant, New Farm Road, Werribee **FREE** Limited seats, bookings are essential (make sure you let us know which session you would like to attend). For more information please contact us [online](#) or call 131722 to make a reservation.

<http://www.melbournewater.com.au/getinvolved/events/Pages/Western-Treatment-Plant-Open-Day.aspx>;

FoTC Platypus Festival Saturday October 12th October 12.00–4.00

Friends of Toolern Creek will be holding their 5th 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.

Sponsored by: Western Water, Bunnings
Major sponsor Western Land Services

Attractions include:

Mickey Mouse	The Balloon Man
Aboriginal Performer	The Connies
Scout Rocket Launches	Platty the Platypus
Animal farm	Pony rides
Wildlife & Waterway display	Free giveaways
Face painting	Jumping castles
Environmental groups	

Big Red Reserve, Tamar Dve & Raymond St
Melton South Melways: 337 A12 Parking available
Info: Lyn Holdsworth 0412 321 848 or
www.fotc.com.au;

Friends of Brisbane Ranges Wildflower Show Sunday 13th October Anakie 9.30am - 4.30pm

Showcasing Victoria's Wildflowers:

wildflower displays bus tours workshops
 environmental stalls photographic display
 native plants cards books

Cash Sales Only - No EFTPOS, Entry: Adult \$5, children under 16 free, Refreshments available at venue. This is a family friendly but pet free event. The wildflower bus tour explores areas filled with wonderful wildflowers in the Brisbane Ranges National Park. There will be opportunities to exit the bus and observe some of the 613 native plants found in the park. The tour will also take you through the Steiglitz Historic Park where you will see historical buildings dating back to the gold rush era. The free one-hour workshops will be held at the Anakie Hall. You will have the opportunity to learn how to identify native orchids and peas by key characteristics.

Bus Tour - Arrive 20 mins earlier for registration (\$10pp book online, includes free entry to the show).

Workshops - arrive 15 mins earlier to reserve a spot (free)

Event organized by Friends of Brisbane Ranges
www.fobr.org.au; Further information & online bus bookings: <http://www.fobr.org.au/wildflowershow>; 0438 945 399; friends_br@yahoo.com.au; Anakie Hall, Staughton Vale Rd, Anakie, Melways Map 611 E4, VicRoads: 77 G7

Federation Day Walk Sunday 13 October 2013**Central hub: Myrning, 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 19th 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; 9747 5407 or mobile 0400 726 887

Birding at Pinkerton, Bush's Paddock & Eynesbury: Sunday 17th November 9.30 – 3.00

Birdlife Australia & PLEG invites 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 80 at Eynesbury to date.

Dave Torr: 9749 5141 or davidtorr@gmail.com; Mob 0400 566 656(BLA) or Daryl Akers: 9743 2495 (PLEG), or www.birdlife.org.au/events; Gates open 9.15am, walk starts 9.30:

Meet at Pinkerton Gate - Pinkerton Forest
Pinkerton Forest is on Mt. Cottrell Rd (Melways Page 7 near the right side about 1/3rd the way up or Map 221 on newer Melways), which runs between Greig's Rd and Boundary Rd. From Greig's Rd there is a group of 2-3 houses on the right after about 2km – entrance to the forest is IMMEDIATELY after these.

If approaching from the south (Boundary Rd) Pinkerton Forest is IMMEDIATELY before the 1st house on the left.

APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh: October meeting Melton Community Hall 23rd October 7.30 pm

Australian Plant Society: Melton & Bacchus Marsh monthly meeting features an evening with Owen Goodman (CFA). "Your Garden & Bushfire". Please register to assist catering: aps@hotkey.net.au; Free. Melton Community Hall, 232 High St Melton. 7.30 for 8.00 start

Planting at Mt Carberry Reserve (Melton South) Saturday October 26th 9am-12pm

Kate McCluskey, of Djerriwarrh Health Services writes:

'Linking Melton South are doing some planting and art works outside Mt Carberry Reserve. We are having a community planting day on Saturday October 26th from 9am-12pm'

Kate McCluskey, Health Promotion Coordinator, Djerriwarrh Health Services, 9361 9360, KateMc@djhs.org.au;

Family Nature Day: Bushs Paddock Grassland Sunday 27th 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://MeltonCityCouncil.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: daryljakers@gmail.com; or Frances Overmars 9748 1294 or www.pinkertonforest.com;

PLEG Exhibition of Environmental Art Melton Visitor Information Centre 4th – 28th February 2014

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group will hold an Environmental Art Exhibition in February 2014. This will be a celebrating of Melton's natural environment. The art exhibition will be part of the Sustainable Living Festival, Australia's largest and oldest sustainability festival. The exhibition will be

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 old Fire Station) at 7:30

email: daryljakers@gmail.com
Website: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au>

a depiction of Melton's local wildlife, wildflowers, scenes and nature in all sizes shapes and forms; including local landscapes: Grasslands, Grassy Woodlands, escarpments, gorges, volcanoes etc. The medium can be by paintings, drawings, collage, mixed media & photographs. (Note: only one artwork per artist) Melton Visitor Information Centre, 323 High Street, Melton, for information Contact Daryl Akers phone: 0438 277 252; darylakers@gmail.com;

Environmental flow from Merrimu Reservoir

Bill Moulden, of Melbourne Water advises:

'Melbourne Water is planning to release environmental water from Merrimu Reservoir over the next two weeks to improve habitat for frogs and water bugs in Coimadai Creek, beginning 1 October.

'Water will be released at a rate of 10 megalitres per day for two days this week and 50 megalitres per day for two days next week. Flow in Coimadai Creek has been around 2 megalitres per day since the middle of July. Water levels may increase by around 10-20 cm during the releases.

'After flowing through Coimadai Creek, the water will be stored in Melton reservoir for release into the lower Werribee River later in the year.'

Bill Moulden, Environmental Water Planner – Waterways, Melbourne Water 9679 6613 PO Box 4342 Melbourne VIC
3001, melbournewater.com.au;

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Ban on consumer & environmental action

According to the ABC *'The Drum'* Tue 24 Sep 2013 *'On Monday, the new federal parliamentary secretary for agriculture Richard Colbeck told The Australian that the government might ban consumer and environmental activists from launching secondary boycotts'*

'The Coalition's boycott proposal demonstrates again that the distinction between economic freedom and free speech is not always great. Sometimes the way we spend our money is literally a form of speech.'

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-24/berg-freedom-of-speech-means-freedom-to-boycott/4977410>;

According to the Wilderness Society:

'The Federal Government's proposal to silence non-government organisations from briefing consumers about environmental credentials of companies and products will be counterproductive, the Wilderness Society said today.

'Parliamentary secretary for agriculture Richard Colbeck announced moves yesterday to try to stop groups from being active in the marketplace.'

"Markets expect high environmental standards and free and fair flows of information and will be increasingly sceptical of governments that impose new laws that constrain communications."
<https://www.wilderness.org.au/gagging-free-information-will-hurt-business>;

The Guardian also reports: Monday 23 September 2013:

"It's an odd move by a pro-free market government to try to protect businesses from consumers receiving credible information about their products," the Wilderness Society's national director, Lyndon Schneiders, said.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/23/greens-blast-ban-on-boycotts>;

Climate Change

Breaking news! Climate change is no more! The Climate Commission has been closed by the new government, so presumably climate change is no longer an issue!

However, on September 24th 2013, the Sydney Morning Herald announced:

'The Climate Commission, axed last week by the Abbott government, is to be rejuvenated by private funding in an effort to keep information about global warming prominent in the public arena, former chief commissioner Tim Flannery has said.

'The decision to create the Australian Climate Council, as the group will now be known, was spurred by "a groundswell of support" across the country, Professor Flannery said.

"We've developed a real reputation for independence and authority in this area, and we just want to continue with that job. We haven't seen any plans from the government to provide an alternative," he said.

'Read more:

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate->

change/private-funds-for-new-climate-think-tank-to-keep-public-informed-20130923-2ua9h.html#ixzz2f19XPMC9;

MELTON WILDLIFE

Mystery of the Botanic Garden Swan family



Swanning about in Melton Botanic Gardens

A few weeks ago a pair of Black Swans set up home at Melton Botanic Gardens, raising a family of newly hatched cygnets. Nora Peters has been monitoring their progress ever since she discovered them nesting there. They seem to be somewhat restless, being found wandering at large in & around the Garden.

John Bentley of Friends of Melton Botanic Garden writes of the Swans' family adventures at the garden:

'We found the swans and cygnets this morning around 9.30am on the road in Williams Street. I think they had been to the Melton Home store. We shepherded them back into the MBG and to Ryans Creek. It took a while as they walk fairly slowly. Cheers, John.'

Nora reported their movements shortly afterward: *'Hi all. Maybe we should put a GPS on them :) I went down at noon with Pete today and searched high and low and couldn't find them, then they turned up swimming in the lake going towards Ryan's Creek, Pete was over that side and got a heap of photos.....I took some from the far side and then this one of them resting in the shade of the tree. Regards'*

However, they had not been seen for several days & their present whereabouts was a mystery. Geraldine of MEG stated that that they may have

migrated to the golf course. Her son plays golf & observed that a family of swans has just moved in. Apparently a single swan has been living there, living on handouts from the golfers (along with the ducks). Presumably the male bird as the female bird was sitting on eggs. Geraldine thinks he may have been trying to lead the family back to the golf course, to take advantage of the free food. However, John Bentley reports two Swans had re-appeared at the lake, but without cygnets. The young birds will not fly for several months so hopefully they can find somewhere safe over this period. The circumstances of the swan family therefore remain something of a mystery.

You can follow the story of their wanderings on Friends of Melton Botanic Garden Facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/63018215768/?fref=ts;](https://www.facebook.com/groups/63018215768/?fref=ts)

ODD SPOT

Magpie nest in Gisborne supermarket carpark



A pair of Magpies has built their nest in the middle of the supermarket car park in Gisborne. The nest is about two metres off the ground, in a three metre tree, in front of the Post Office. A busier place to set up home could scarcely be imagined.

