



MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 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

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

FACEBOOK

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

NATURE OUT WEST

Nature out West is a blog created 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 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).

KABV / Sustainability Cities Award 2013

Protection of the Environment: Arnolds Creek Biolink

The plaque awarded to MEG for Protection of the Environment will be displayed at Melton Council. The plaque will now be displayed where it will be seen by as many people as possible.

GRANTS

Western Water Frances' Environment Grant



MEG has successfully applied for a Western Water Frances' Environment grant, for in kind support & \$1,100 for plants & restoration works at the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project at Brookfield. This grant also includes the offer of Western Water staff participating in environment work at Brookfield.

To quote Western Water:

'Frances' Environment Grants were established under Western Water's Corporate Social Responsibility program to support sustainability, community-based flora & fauna projects in the local area. Your project strongly aligns with our vision. I would encourage the Melton Environment

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

Group to partner with Western Water when possible to ensure the project's success.'

Many thanks to Western Water for their contribution to environmental restoration of Arnolds Creek.

Melbourne Water grant

MEG has also applied for two separate Melbourne Water grants, for \$5,000 each.

- Grant 1 is for environmental works along Arnolds Creek at Brookfield.
- Grant 2 is for the Brookfield Residents Group, in partnership with MEG, for environmental works on Arnolds Creek (West).

MEG EVENTS IN OCTOBER

Brushcutting at Brookfield

Extensive weeding has been done at Brookfield, thanks to our donated brushcutter. We can now see our plants once again, in the two peripheral planting zones, at both ends of the initial planting project area. The area we planted first is less weedy as the plants are getting mature enough to begin crowding out many of the weeds.

Birdwalk in Long Forest Mallee



On Saturday 26th October MEG hosted a bird walk in Long Forest Mallee. This 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. *'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.



Nora in pursuit of Red-capped Robins



Male Red-capped Robin

We saw two species of Raven & two species of Robin on the day. Nora identified the Australian Ravens by their distinctive calls. Almost the first bird we saw was a Red-capped Robin, perched in the picnic ground, but it took off when a camera was produced. Fortunately it was back there again, on our return, joined by its much less spectacular mate. The morning was dull & overcast, so we did not see a great many birds. However, we still managed to see 14 bird species. Other photos on natureoutwest.wordpress.com/author/natureoutwest/;

Red-capped Robin
Grey Shrike-thrush
Little Raven
Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Yellow-faced Honeyeater
White-plumed Honeyeater
Grey Fantail

Scarlet Robin
Magpie
Australian Raven
Buff-rumped Thornbill
Blue wren
Pied Currawong
White Cockatoo

Planting at Brookfield



On Thursday 31st November Bev, John & several Brookfield residents joined Daryl in planting trees in two more prepared 'islands' in the area between the internal laneway & the freeway. We planted over 60 trees, including Yellow Box, Blue Box, Buloke, Golden Wattle & Hedge Wattle. Next year we will plant a large number of wildflowers, shrubs & ground covers on these sites. These two new 'islands' as well as the 'island' already intensively planted on National Tree Day should create a windbreak for this bleak site, as well as providing valuable wildlife habitat & vastly improving the human amenity value here. Holes had been dug earlier thereby making treeplanting on the day much more efficient.

COMING MEG EVENTS

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 (ie. Pinkerton & Eynesbury Forests). Melton bird records will be placed on our website. MEG birdwalk details are on:

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

Hannah Watts is in High St, just east of the shopping centre, opposite the golf course.

Melway Page 337 Ref D9

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

FoTC Platypus Festival



Melton MP Don Nardella opening Platypus Festival

On Saturday October 12th October Friends of Toolern Creek held their 6th Platypus Festival. Local environmental, community & garden groups, including MEG participated. 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, & was sponsored by Western Water, Bunnings, with major sponsor Western Land Services.



Roberto the Connie

Attractions included, Mickey Mouse, the Balloon Man, Aboriginal Performer Gnarrayahe, The Connies, Scout rocket launches, Platty the Platypus, animal farm, Pony rides, wildlife & waterway display, free giveaways, face painting, jumping castles & local environmental groups. This year the Scouts did much of the work staffing activities & making sure things ran smoothly. The environmentally-friendly rocket launching by the Scouts proved especially popular. These consisted of rockets made from paper & cardboard, with discarded plastic soft drink bottle providing the propulsion. The Connies are always popular, with Carmelina acting as roving MC while Roberto told stories about the environment & local wildlife; &

handed out the popular Connies Cards. Over 2000 people visited the festival this year.

Spring Wildflower Walk in Melton



Wildflower walk in Melton Gilgai Woodland

On Saturday 19th October Bryan Roberts (Melton Environmental Planner and Botanist) led a wildflower walk in Melton Gilgai Woodland Environmental Reserve in Harkness Road & McCorkells Road to see the local wildflowers. Western Land Services' Peter Sell (also a MEG member) who manages the woodland also pointed out many features of interest in the woodland.

We saw a large variety of wildflowers including; two forms of Bush Peas (*Eutaxia*), Turkey Bush, Chocolate & Vanilla Lilies, *Wahlenbergias*, *Teucrium* & *Pussytails* (*Ptilotis spathulatus*). Unfortunately the *Templetonias* had finished flowering but they now have large green seedpods.

We saw the large mob of Eastern grey Kangaroos that makes Melton Gilgai Woodland their home. Peter has counted 150 kangaroos here. As the weather was pretty wild & windy we did not see many birds out & about. A few Little Ravens, Grey Currawongs, Dusky Woodswallows & a group of Choughs that appeared as we were leaving.

We found the nest of a Dusky Woodswallow with several eggs, with an anxious pair of parent birds fluttering about. On MEG's previous bird walk here on August 31st, this same nest was also occupied, with several eggs. Perhaps these nests are re-used several times during the breeding season.

The grassland reserve beside McCorkells Road displayed a magnificent array of grassland

wildflowers. This spring sees a magnificent flowering of Victorian Volcanic Plains wildflowers here. Bryan pointed out the rich diversity of plants & wildflowers here. At times we appeared to be walking through a sea of bright yellow Common Everlastings. Remnant grasslands such as this give an impression of what the Volcanic Plains may have looked like. Massed wildflowers of all colours scattered among the green Kangaroo Grass.



In a sea of Common Everlastings

John Smith of Toolern Vale explained that McCorkells Road is a Three Chain road, (ie three chains wide) unlike most roads that are one chain wide. He stated that in the old days the bullock teams needed three chains in which to turn around! The extra width of the road meant that it formed the major strategic firebreak north of Melton. As the roadside reserve was burnt regularly, to create the firebreak, the tall native grasses were kept in check. This allowed the native wildflowers to flourish, without being smothered by the rampant grasses. Hence the creation of the firebreak has also resulted in this magnificent wildflower reserve. McCorkells Road offers an unprecedented view of wildflowers & native grasses, with the backdrop of the hills in the background. This is a view that needs to be protected!

Other photos of this walk published on Nature Out West: <http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com>;

Family Nature Day: Bush's Paddock Grassland
On Sunday 27th October Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group (PLEG), Melton City Council & Western Water invited the community to a family open day at Bush's Paddock. About 25 people participated in the family picnic / BBQ. Visitors had

the opportunity to cook their own damper over the campfire (& eat it)!



A bucket of water from the dam was found to contain a variety of pond life. These included Seed Shrimp, beetle larvae & water bugs such as Water Boatmen & Backswimmers. The discovery of a Mayfly larva was a pleasant surprise. Mayfly larvae have a very low tolerance of pollution so the presence of these insects indicates clean, unpolluted water.

There were several Eastern Froglet tadpoles. Froglets could also be heard calling from the water. We also found three Spotted Marsh Frogs, including one with only three legs! Previously only Spotted Marsh Frogs have been recorded from this site, so the presence of Eastern Froglets is a surprise. A new species for Bush's Paddock! Other photos on: www.pinkertonforest.com;

COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

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 the 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.

Birds, Bats & Botany

Diggers Rest, Saturday 23rd November 3.30 pm

'Friends of Holden Reserve, in conjunction with Jacksons Creek Eco Network, invite you to join us for a Ramble and Picnic in the Reserve. Explore some of the hidden parts of our beautiful Reserve and learn about the local plants and wildlife. Wear sturdy walking shoes, hat etc. Bring a picnic tea, drink, and a rug to sit on. Jacksons Creek Eco Network will provide pre -dinner nibbles. Friends and family welcome. Saturday afternoon 23rd November, 2013, 3.30 pm at corner of Watsons Rd and Crinnion Rd, Diggers Rest. Melways 352: G2/3.'

Christina Cheers, President, Jacksons Creek EcoNetwork, 30 Callander Close, Sunbury, Vic 3429 Ph 03 9744 1923, www.jcen.org.au;

Marine activities for school groups

Williamstown Dec – end of Feb

'Parks Victoria in Williamstown manages Jawbone Marine Sanctuary and Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary. Over the summer period (Dec – end of Feb) we will have an experienced Marine Biologist named Jacqui Pocklington working for us who will be performing the duties of a Marine Intern.

I would like to invite you to take advantage of this rare opportunity and book in a date for activities such as Rockpool Rambles, Sea snail measuring or any other beach activities with an environmental focus.

Activities would be tide dependent (low tide), so if you are interested, please contact me with a date and I will inform you of the time of low tide. If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me.'

Toby, Acting Marine Ranger, Parks Victoria, Williamstown: Toby.Stringer@parks.vic.gov.au;

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 celebration of the natural

environment of the Melton region. The art exhibition will be part of the Sustainable Living Festival, Australia's largest and oldest sustainability festival. The exhibition will be 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)

One artist will receive a Botanic Artists Workshop at Royal Botanic Gardens of Melbourne: (cost \$349) either:

- 4 day Botanical Art Beginner Workshop or
- 3 day Photography for Botanical Artists Workshop)

There will also be a Peoples' Choice award, judged by visitors, for a bottle of champagne!

Contact Daryl Akers phone: 0437 277 25;

darylakers@gmail.com;

Melton Visitor Information Centre, 323 High Street, Melton, VIC, 3337 (Mel Ref: 337 B9) Open daily 9am - 5pm 9747 7300; visitor@melton.vic.gov.au; www.melton.vic.gov.au/visit;

OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS

Exhibition: Maps and Aerial Views of Melton Melton Information Centre 2nd -17th November

This exhibition showcases maps and information on local Indigenous culture, "Melton from the Air" video by film maker Chris Siers, artistic interpretation of maps and historical maps of Melton. Saturday 2 – Sunday 17 November 9am – 5pm, Melton Visitor Information Centre, 323 High Street, Melton

34th Djerriwarrh Festival

Saturday 9th November 11am – 10pm

'The Djerriwarrh Festival is Melton Shire's biggest community festival with activities and fun for the whole family! The carnival atmosphere of the Djerriwarrh Festival is a must for people of all ages with events across the Shire, and this event is free /no cost. Popular features of the Festival return again this year includes: the street parade, market stalls, Lions Club carnival, activities for children and young people and the spectacular fireworks display. This year the 80s electro-pop icons Pseudo Echo and earthy psychrockers Stonefield will headline the festival main stage and are sure to appeal to eclectic tastes. Main event site:

Melton Recreation Reserve. For info:

http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Out_n_About/Events/Djerriwarrh_Festival_2013 or contact the [Melton Visitor Information Centre.](#)'

Community Movie Night in Melton South Mt Carberry Reserve Friday 22nd November

Kate McCluskey writes:

'Linking Melton South are running a free community outdoor movie night at Mt Carberry Reserve on Friday November 22nd. Festivities will start at 5.30pm with a free bbq, info stalls, market stalls, come and try activities, face painting and a roaming clown. The night will be targeted towards families with a children's movie being shown at 8.30pm.

'This would be a fantastic opportunity to showcase your group/services and to make face-to-face contact with the community. I invite you to hold an information/activity stall. If you are interested, please fill in the application form attached and return to me with a copy of your organisation's certificate of currency for public liability insurance.'

'It would be great to be able to showcase the services and groups available to the Melton South community at a one-stop-shop.

If you have any queries, please contact me. I hope to hear from you soon.

Thanks, Kate McCluskey, Health Promotion Coordinator, Djerriwarrh Health Services, 03 9361 9360, KateMc@djhs.org.au;

MELTON WILDLIFE



Brookfield mascots: Willy Wagtails

Our two Brookfield mascots, the Willy Wagtails, are again nesting in a Black Wattle beside the

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/>

creek. There are three eggs in the nest. They were indignant at recent brushcutting operations around & beneath their nest, chattering & fluttering, but they settled back on the nest as soon as the brushcutting had moved on. These two Willy Wagtails always accompany us whenever we work at Brookfield. They are especially happy when we spread mulch as they feast on grubs uncovered when the mulch is scattered.

Wallabies at Arnolds Creek

Linda Bradburn (City of Melton Environmental Educator) advised that Parks & Gardens staff have reported a family of Swamp Wallabies living in the lower Arnolds Creek volcanic gorge. A single wallaby was seen there a few months ago but it is good to know a family has taken up residence there. Presumably they are not finding the building work in the adjacent new housing estate too disturbing & hopefully they will remain here.

Spring!



Female Wood Duck calling from nest hollow



Galahs at nesting hollow



Crimson Rosellas in Plane Tree in Bacchus Marsh



Galah nesting in Plane Tree in Bacchus Marsh



Jacky Winter on nest in Bush's Paddock woodland



Blackbird nest in Melton South

Up-date on Black Swans of FMBG.....

In October a pair of swans set up home at Melton Botanic Gardens, raising a family of cygnets. They seem to be somewhat restless, being found wandering at large in & around the Garden, eventually moving to Melton Golf Course;

Nora Peters writes:

'Hi all

Kelly was passing the Yuille St side of the golf course this morning on her way to a lesson and spotted the family beside the pond....rang me... I hot-footed down there and found the family about to move and the rain was going to pour but I got a few shots through the wire fence..... haven't the babies grown J..... parents just as protective but only four.....a few golfers were approaching so 'Dad' (the one flapping its wings) woke everyone up and into the water for food and a swim away from the passers-by I do hope you like the photos, use if you want, in newsletters!

Last time that I saw them was on the 10-9-13 when three days old (last photo with the Pelican passing the other way).....(8-9 weeks ago?....how time flies!)



Geckoes in the suburbs

Recently a large Marbled Gecko was found to have made its home in a hot water service. A large volume of droppings indicated that there had been gecko activity in the heater for quite some time. Geckoes are often found around houses or fences in Melton. They seem to favour sites close to heat sources, such as an outdoor wall against an indoor heater, or in this instance, a hot water service. A home with gas heating should enable the gecko to remain active throughout the colder months. Another gecko was recently found living in a BBQ in Williamstown. Yet another gecko was recently found in a rolled up newspaper that had just been removed from a mailbox, in Shepparton! They are also found in stacks of stakes & plant tubes! Most suburban lizards depend upon more natural habitat (ie gardens) for survival in the city but geckoes seem able to successfully move into our actual homes. These delicate looking creatures are successfully adapting to urbanisation, in the trendy inner city & in the suburbs!



BBQ-dwelling Marbled Gecko in Williamstown



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