



# MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2014

### 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 ONLINE

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

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

**Nature out West** is a blog created by MEG to highlight the beauty & diversity of Melton's flora & fauna, as well as its more spectacular landscape.  
<http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/>;

### NEXT MEG MEETING

- MEG's next meeting will be Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014.
- MEG's annual Social Day at Blackwood will be in March, to avoid fire danger.

MEG meetings are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, at 7:30, at Don Nardella's office in Alexandra St (beside Ambulance Station).

### JANUARY

Heatwave conditions in early January resulted in urgent watering of our plants at Brookfield. This was followed by rain a week later, just before the Australia Day weekend. The rain was not substantial, about 5mm, but still very welcome! Only to be followed by another heat wave at the end of the month!

### MEG EVENTS IN JANUARY

#### First Working Bee at Brookfield for 2014



Geraldine, Carmen & Flo at Brookfield

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January MEG had our first working bee for 2014. Geraldine, Carmen, Flo, Michelle & Daryl met at Brookfield where we weeded & watered the central 'island' at Brookfield. Some of the plants were suffering from the previous week's four-day heat wave but most were looking healthy. The site had been watered the week before during the heatwave but it was decided to give them some more water. We also removed Galenia, thistles & other weeds from the plot; as well as removing rubbish. Most weeds however had succumbed to the summer heat & lack of rain.

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)



Lunch at Brookfield

This winter we will be again planting here at this site, as well as the new site proposed by our Environmental Advisor Peter Sell, in the bare area between the remnant Grey Box woodland & the lone Grey Box tree.



Proposed new planting site at Brookfield

On our way out we noticed several small seedling gumtrees in the grass. In accordance with MEG's ongoing practice of protecting such self-sown young trees, we will return to place treeguards around those trees that it is practical to protect from grass cutting operations. We have found this to be an effective means of assisting regrowth of local native trees & complementing the natural regrowth of the site. It is always more effective to protect such self-sown trees than to spend limited resources purchasing, planting & then watering nursery-grown plants. A clear example of the bushland regenerating itself!

### Funding for planting of trees in Melton South

Kate McCluskey, Health Promotion Coordinator, of Djerriwarrh Health Services has asked for interested parties to support seeking funding to plant out nature strips/parks in Melton South with native plants. This would need some community involvement in this in terms of ideas about where to plant and assistance with planting.

*'We need to prove that we have community support and involvement in this project in order to apply for funding.....'*

We discussed this at our working bee at Brookfield. It was decided that this is something MEG should support. Doug suggested that we could supply some trees that did not plant last year. There are a number of trees, grown by MEG that we could make available for this project.

### Navan Park

Navan Park was also discussed. Perhaps we can return to Navan Park this winter to plant trees around the lakeside. The lake would benefit greatly by the planting of a ring of Red Gums & Blue Box around the edge.

### AUSTRALIA DAY

MEG's Peter Sell was nominated for Melton's Australia Day Community Achievement award.

### GRANTS

#### Melbourne Water grants

MEG has just been awarded two separate Melbourne Water grants

#### • Arnolds Creek Biolink

- Grant 1 for MEG for environmental works along Arnolds Creek at Brookfield.

Site preparation	\$3000
Plants	\$1000
New equipment (mattocks, treeplanter etc)	\$1000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5000</b>

#### • Arnolds Creek Biolink

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

Site preparation	\$2000
Plants	\$1000
Equipment	\$ 500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3500</b>

There is also a separate grant of \$1000 for administration Incorporation fees, public liability, PO Box rental, website maintenance (server & webmaster costs)

**Total** **\$1000**

MEG will take the opportunity to buy new planting equipment ie, lightweight mattocks, safety equipment etc.



Brookfield residents group will also be able to buy equipment for planting & maintenance, as well as plants & site maintenance

### Western Water Frances' Environment grant

MEG has placed an order from Western Plains Indigenous Nursery for planting at Brookfield in 2014, thanks to Western Water's Frances' Environment grant. The grant of \$1,000 for purchase of plants is part of Western Water's 2013 Environmental Grants Program for plants; this also includes the offer of Western Water staff participating in environmental work at Brookfield.

#### Plants ordered include:

Red Gum	Grey Box	Blue Box
Bursaria	Melicytis	Hop Bush
Chocolate Lily	Senna	Indigofera
Gold-dust Wattle	Varnish Wattle	
Dianella amoena	Dianella revoluta	
Yellow Rush-lily	Blue Grasslily	
Pelargonium rodneyanum	Stipa elegantissima	
Bush Pea ( <i>Eutaxia diffusa</i> & <i>E. microphylla</i> )		

### BROOKFIELD

#### Arnolds Creek at Brookfield: freeway site

On Treeplanting Day 2013 we planted on our new site at Brookfield, adjacent to the Western Highway, for the first time. This is a partnership project with Brookfield Village residents. We planted on 3 'islands' with sufficient space between them for grass slashing operations. Most of the plants we planted are doing well, although some have succumbed to the already hot & dry summer; making watering necessary in January. As well as the trees & shrubs, the wildflowers are also doing well. Yellow Everlasting Daisies (*Chrysocephalus semipapposum*), Bulbine Lily & Showy Podolepis; blue *Dianella longifolia*; magenta *Pelargonium rodneyanum* & pink *Pelargonium australe* have all flowered in a variety of colours. The Bulbine Lilies & Podolepis have also set seed!

We will be working on these sites again this year, planting a variety of ground covers, wildflowers & understory plants. Those plants that have been mulched are in much better condition than those without. The soil under the mulch is still moist while the exposed soil is dry & cracking. After the next decent rain we will need to mulch the remaining plants, to seal in the moisture. There is

no point doing this before decent rains as dry mulch will keep the rain from the soil.



Podolepis flowering & setting seed at Brookfield



Chrysocephalus semipapposum at Brookfield





Dianella longifolia at Brookfield



Brookfield site beside Western Highway

There is a wide band of green grass covering about a third of the Brookfield site, in sharp contrast to the dry remainder of the site. A band of large moisture-loving Red Gums & Blue Box trees, as well as Grey & Yellow Box trees, will effectively take up the excess moisture seeping into this area, thereby denying moisture & nutrients to the rank weeds & drain sedge that grow here. This would plug a gap in the windbreak as well as muffling the ever-present freeway noise; as well as providing further wildlife habitat. It would also in time reduce the need for grass slashing operations here. Nature would appear to be showing us where our next planting site here should be in 2015!

### OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS

#### Cruelty Free west Expo 2013

Rana Hales of CSAWN writes:

*'On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December, CSAWN held our third annual Cruelty Free West Expo. With 22 stalls, animal ambassadors from Edgar's Mission, free vegan finger food, kids' activities, raffles, a bakesale and showbags, this was our biggest expo yet!'*

*'Polly Piglet wowed the adoring crowd with her intellect (and cheekiness). The delicious finger food (provided by WestWaters Hotel) and our bakesale demonstrated how varied and tasty a cruelty free diet can be. Animal welfare/rights groups raised awareness about a range of issues, local cruelty free businesses showcased their wares and people had the chance to sample some great products through our raffles and showbags.'*

*'This expo was made possible through WestWaters Hotel's Community Funding Program. CSAWN would also like to thank our [sponsors](#), supporters, stallholders, volunteers and of course, all of the visitors on the day.'*

*'Don't forget to checkout the photos on our [facebook page](#).*

*'For more information about The Cruelty Free West Expo or our sponsors, please visit our website [www.csawn.org](http://www.csawn.org)*

*We look forward to seeing you at The Cruelty Free West Expo 2014! '*

Rana Hales, President/ Coordinator, Caroline Springs Animal Welfare Network, P: 0410 315 808

E: [csawnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:csawnetwork@gmail.com); [www.csawn.org](http://www.csawn.org)

PO Box 3682 Caroline Springs 3023

Join us on [facebook](#), Follow us on [Twitter](#)

### COMING MEG EVENTS

#### Bird Walk at Caroline Springs wetland

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February 9.00 – 11.00**

Melton Environment Group Bird Group will host its first bird walk for 2014 at Caroline Springs wetland on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February. Last year we saw 32 bird species, in two hours, in a site totally surrounded by suburbia. All the waterbirds were quite tame, reflecting the large numbers of walkers & joggers along the creekside tracks.

Meet in the carpark behind the medical centre beside the large lake at the entrance at Caroline Springs BLVD. *Melway 358 Ref G4*

#### Clean Up Australia Day

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 10.00 – 11.30**

MEG will once more be participating in Clean Up Australia Day this year. BBQ afterward at Hannah Watts Park. We will be cleaning up at our planting site at Brookfield. 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.

President: Daryl Akers  
Secretary: Doug Godsill  
Meetings:

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

email: [darylakers@gmail.com](mailto:darylakers@gmail.com)  
Website: <http://meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au/>

The site is very child friendly. Melways Map 336 Ref G11.

Details on: <http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/>

### **Bird Walk in Eynesbury Forest**

**Saturday 9th March 9.00 – 11.00**

Melton Environment Group Bird Group will host a bird walk at Eynesbury, around the ornamental lake to the historic shearing shed & back, along the gravel walking track (no bushwalking required). Possibly finish at the bluestone cafe for snacks.

We should see a variety of both wetland & woodland birds. 133 bird species have been found here to date. Details of Eynesbury birdlife on:

<http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/melton-nature-out-west/>;

Wear hats, walking shoes & sun cream. Walk will be cancelled if a Fire Ban Day is declared. Meet in the carpark beside the Discovery Centre. Melway 226 Ref H2 (or just follow the large roadside signs to Eynesbury).

### **Social Day at Blackwood**

**March TBA**

MEG's annual Social Day at Blackwood will be in March, to avoid fire danger.

### **MEG BIRD GROUP 2014**

Beginners who have had no prior involvement in bird watching are welcome on Melton Environment Group bird walks. All sites are easy walking, with no bushwalking involved. Walks in bushland (Eynesbury, Strathtulloh, Melton Gilgai) will be cancelled if a Fire Ban Day is declared. Other suggestions for bird walk venues in the local area are invited.

Details of MEG birdwalk are on:

<http://natureoutwest.wordpress.com/>; &  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Melton-Environment-Group/139259387879?fref=ts>;

**Caroline Springs Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February**

**Eynesbury Forest Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March**

### **Strathtulloh Woodland**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 9.00 – 11.00**

Strathtulloh Woodland, along the paved walking track (no bushwalking required).

Strathtulloh Circuit in: Melway Page 343 Ref A12

### **Hannah Watts Park**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 9.00 – 11.00**

Hannah Watts is in High St, just east of the shopping centre, opposite the golf course. Melway Page 337 Ref D9

### **Toolern Creek (Big Red)**

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

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

### **Toolern Regional Park**

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July**

Bridge Rd Melton South, (beside bridge) Melway 343 ref B5

### **Arnolds Creek: Brookfield**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August**

Meet at Arnolds Creek in Black Dog Drive at the corner of Coburns Road & Black Dog Drive. Melways Map 336 Ref G11.

### **Melton Gilgai Woodland**

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September**

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

### **Eynesbury Forest**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October**

Meet in the carpark beside the Discovery Centre. Melway 226 Ref H2 (or just follow the large roadside signs to Eynesbury)

### **Long Forest Mallee**

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November**

Long Forest Mallee (LFM) is a unique Mallee remnant between Melton & Bacchus Marsh.

Long Forest Road Melway 335 Ref E3

### **COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS**

#### **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](mailto:Toby.Stringer@parks.vic.gov.au);

### **PLEG Exhibition of Environmental Art Melton Visitor Information Centre 8<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

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

### **Birding at Pinkerton, Bush's Paddock & Eynesbury: Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February 09.15am**

Birdlife Australia & PLEG invite 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 125 at Eynesbury to date.

Dave Torr: 9749 5141 or [davidtorr@gmail.com](mailto:davidtorr@gmail.com) ,  
Mob 0400 566 656(BLA) or Daryl Akers: 9743 2495 (PLEG), or [www.birdlife.org.au/events](http://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.

### **PLEG's first meeting for 2014**

**Western Water, Tuesday 18th February 7.30pm**  
Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group (PLEG) will hold its first meeting for 2014 on Tuesday 18th

February. 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

### **Presentation by Yarra Riverkeeper Ian Penrose Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February**

John Forrester, Werribee Riverkeeper writes:

*'The Yarra Riverkeeper Ian Penrose, will speak in Wyndham on 20th February. Ian has successfully led many positive initiatives for the Yarra River, and is now assisting with greater recognition for the Werribee. Ian's group has graduated to a prominent role in consultation on the Yarra as shown by a recent bulletin by his group. His talk will support the Werribee River Association with the role of the Werribee Riverkeeper. RSVP by Tuesday 19th February.'*

John Forrester, Werribee Riverkeeper & WRivA President, Mob: 0401854560, PO Box 74 Werribee VIC 3030, [werribeeriver@gmail.com](mailto:werribeeriver@gmail.com);  
[www.werribeeriver.org.au](http://www.werribeeriver.org.au)

*We've had an active year - See us on Facebook  
Working for the Werribee River since 1981*

### **OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

#### **Climate Council: 'Off the Charts: 2013 was Australia's hottest year'**

According to the Climate Council:

*'The year began with a bang. A massive pool of hot air was established over 70% of the continent at the beginning of January. Australia recorded its hottest ever area-averaged maximum temperature of 40.30°C on 7 January.'*

*'Through the period 2 – 8 January, the country experienced seven consecutive days of area-averaged maximum temperature over 39°C. In 102 years of weather records, Australia has experienced only 21 such days, and eight of them occurred in 2013. January 2013 was Australia's hottest January on record.'*

*'The sea surface temperatures in the region around Australia were also very high. Records were set for both January and February, with the record for February 0.6°C above the long-term (1961-1990) average and 0.13°C above the previous record.'*

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'Warm weather continued past the end of summer, leading to more heat records in autumn, and pushing back the onset of the cooler months. The winter remained mild, and was the third warmest on record.

'Record-breaking heat reappeared at the end of August and pushed winter rudely out the door. On 31 August, the average maximum temperature for Australia reached 29.92°C, the warmest winter day 2013 in detail on record. The end of August marked the warmest 12-month period (1 September 2012 – 31 August 2013) on record. 'Spring immediately began to look like summer as Australia experienced its hottest September on record, with some remarkable observations. The monthly average temperature was 2.75°C above the 1961-1990 average, smashing the previous September record by 1.1°C. Some of the state records were astounding; South Australia shattered its previous record by 5.39°C and New South Wales by 4.68°C.

'Then came October, 1.43°C above the long-term average (BoM 2013a). The October heat was widespread as the entire continent experienced above-average temperatures. Alice Springs airport had its hottest October day on record (42.6°C), Canberra was 2.5°C hotter than the long-term average, and West Kimberley (WA) set a new record, around 4°C above the long-term average. 'The end of October marked the third month in a row that a record was set for the warmest 12-month period. By the end of November, Australia had experienced its warmest spring on record. By then, we were well on track to experience our hottest calendar year since records began over 100 years ago. Above-average temperatures continued through the remainder of 2013 to finish off a remarkable year for heat.'

<http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2013offthecharts.hottesty-ear-1.pdf>;

## OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Blak Kabaret      The Coopers Malthouse**  
**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February**

Ed Story writes:

'Malthouse Theatre & City of Melbourne proudly present **Blak Kabaret**, as part of Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival 2014

MC Kylie Belling

Kutch Edwards, Bunna Lawrie, Illana Atkinson, Joey Geia, Bart Willoughby, Selwyn Burnes & Ce Cee, Uncle Herb Patten, Tiriki Onus, Shiralee

Hood, Black Elvis, Peter Rotumah, Kevin Kropinyeri, Nikki Ashby, Den the Fish, produced by Jason Timaru

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 8.30 pm

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 8.30

Sunday 9 February 7.30

Beckett Theatre, the Coopers Malthouse

Book now: [malthousetheatre.com.au](http://malthousetheatre.com.au); 03 9685

5111 tickets \$15 - \$20

## MELTON WILDLIFE

### Too darn hot



Rainbow Lorikeets enjoying the water

The recent heat wave, as well as stressing out the human population, also created heat stress in the local wildlife population. Birds were gaping, with beaks open; looking for cool spots & taking advantage of any water available. Kangaroos in Eynesbury Forest can be seen leaving the forest at dusk, seeking water in a shrinking dam beside the road. There was even a Koala in Eynesbury reported to be seeking water to drink!

One morning during the heat wave a cat was lying on the ground, less than half a metre from its food bowl, presumably waiting for breakfast. A Crow (aka Little Raven) was busily helping itself to

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leftovers from the bowl. The cat looked at the crow, with little interest. Too darn hot to bother!



Red Wattlebird keeping its feet cool

When the temperature goes over 40° many birds, other wildlife & pets suffer greatly from heat stress, even death. Dead birds can often be seen on the ground during heat waves, having succumbed to the heat. Even possums are affected by the excessive heat. Making water available in our gardens for birds & other wildlife helps them cope with heat stress, until the return of cooler weather in a few days.

#### Masked Woodswallow in Eynesbury



Masked Woodswallow in Eynesbury

This Masked Woodswallow was photographed in Eynesbury in January 2014. There may have been a pair of them. The Masked Woodswallow is rarely found in this region. One was also seen some years ago in Bush's Paddock Woodland. Its more common relatives (Dusky Woodswallow & White-browed Woodswallow) are more commonly seen here in warmer months. Eynesbury Forest is presently home to over 100 White-browed

Woodswallows, with a smaller number in Pinkerton Forest & Bush's Paddock. A number of Dusky Woodswallows are presently resident in Melton Gilgai Woodland. Woodswallows return yearly to this reason to breed over the warmer months.

More info on: Masked Woodswallow:

<http://www.graemechapman.com.au/library/viewphotos.php?c=576>;

#### Willy Wagtails: Brookfield Mascots

MEG members were once again accompanied on our initial working bee for 2014 at Brookfield, by our unofficial mascots, the Willy Wagtails. They would appear as soon as we arrived, following us about, no doubt hoping for food. They would be especially happy when we moved mulch around, uncovering worms, grubs & other insects. They are even unfazed by the noise of the whipper snipper, flitting about hunting insects disturbed by brush cutting. Our team of mascots this year has increased to four, due to their successful nesting in the Black Wattle beside the creek. This Willy Wagtail followed us back to the carpark!



#### Lathams Snipe at Melton Botanic Gardens

MEG's Geraldine Kelly reports two rare Lathams Snipe at Melton Botanic Garden wetlands in January. These endangered birds are listed Nationally as a Marine species and a Migratory species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* & Near Threatened under the *Advisory List of Threatened Vertebrate Fauna in Victoria 2003*. These migratory birds are seen fairly regularly in Melton Botanic Garden. They have also been seen in lower Arnolds Creek & Eynesbury dam. The Melton Botanic Garden wetlands are an important refuge as they migrate to & from this region.

#### WILDLIFE RESCUE

Ring: 13 000 94535

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