



MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER APRIL 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 16th April 2014.

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

WILDLIFE RESCUE

Ring: 13 000 94535

MARCH

Again, little rain since the beginning of spring. The drought conditions that scorched & decimated our plants throughout summer have stretched into autumn. Some welcome rain the last week of the month. Hopefully more rain to come!

MEG EVENTS IN MARCH

Clean Up Australia Day



ON Sunday 2nd March MEG participated once more in Clean Up Australia Day this year, at our planting site at Brookfield. Eight people met at Arnolds Creek in Black Dog Drive beside Brookfield Retirement Village. We picked up a total of 10 bags. This was much less than last year's total of 16 bags. Again, most of the rubbish was collected from the storm drains. However, heavy vegetation in these acted as an effective filter, preventing almost all of the litter from getting into the creek

This year's unusual find was three Australian passports in the creek, probably thrown from the footbridge! These were handed to the Police. A

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

Bong was also found nearby. Cleanup participants gathered for the traditional BBQ afterward at Hannah Watts Park, provided by Melton Council.



Cleaning up at Arnolds Creek footbridge



Passports & bong found in Arnolds Creek

Bird Walk at Eynesbury



Eynesbury Ornamental Lake

On Saturday 8th March MEG Bird Group hosted a bird walk at Eynesbury, around the ornamental lake. There were so many birds there we remained by the lake for the entire walk. The exciting highlight of the day was finding 12 Freckled Ducks!

These ducks should be safe from the annual barbaric slaughter of ducks in Victoria, but only as long as they remain in Eynesbury! Many protected bird species (including Freckled Ducks) are shot illegally each duck season, by irresponsible & ignorant shooters. According to BIRDING-AUS: 'At least 75 dead Freckled Ducks retrieved from wetlands in the first six days of duck season 2014. It appears they are being targeted by some duck hunters.' <http://birding-aus.org/duck-season-2014-2/>;

DEPI states:

'The Freckled Duck is a rare bird found in inland south-eastern Australia and the south-west of Western Australia, however, vagrants may occur elsewhere, particularly during periods of drought. Freckled Duck prefer fresh, densely vegetated waters; particularly floodwater swamps and creeks vegetated with lignum or canegrass.'

[http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/game-hunting/australian-waterfowl/other-waterfowl-found-in-victoria/freckled-duck](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/game-hunting/australian-waterfowl/other-waterfowl-found-in-victoria/freckled-duck;);
also see:
<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/species/Stictonetta-naevosa>; &
<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=365>;



Freckled Ducks at Eynesbury

A total of 38 bird species were seen, all without leaving the car park & lake!

These included:

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 Ambulance Station) at 7:30

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

Black Duck	Wood Duck	Hardhead Duck
Chestnut Teal	Freckled Duck	Muscovy Duck
Coot	Dusky Moorhen	Purple Swamphen
Masked Lapwing	White Ibis	Little Pied Cormorant
Australasian Grebe	Hoary-headed Grebe	Whistling Kite
Eastern Rosella	Crimson Rosella	Red-rumped Parrot
Galah	White Cockatoo	Long-billed Corella
Crested Pigeon	Turtledove	Domestic Pigeon
Brown Treecreeper	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Mynah
Starling	Welcome Swallow	Blue Wren
Tree Martin	Willy Wagtail	Little Grassbird
Reed Warbler	Red Wattlebird	Diamond Firetail
House Sparrow		White-plumed Honeyeater

133 bird species have been found here to date.

Details of Eynesbury birdlife on:

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

Social Day at Blackwood:



Tom, Khloe, Karen Sell, John Davies & Brian Kelly leading the walk at Blackwood

On Sunday March 23rd MEG had our annual BBQ at Blackwood this year, to avoid fire danger. We met at Blackwood Hotel corner as usual, but we had our customary walk first, before lunch. Peter had worked out a walk for us along Whipstick Creek Loop walking track from St Erth. The walk this year was led by John Davies of Barry's Reef Landcare. John was one of those who had actually constructed the walking track, so he was able to describe the walk in detail.

We then went to the Mineral Springs picnic ground beside the creek for our BBQ. Sausages, bread & other foods were supplied by MEG while members brought salads, snacks & desserts.



Brian, Peter, Doug & Elaine at Blackwood Planting at Brookfield 2014



Eastern bank of Arnolds Creek at Brookfield

The area where we intend planting this winter, with Melbourne Water funding, is marked out boldly in green in this photo. Even at the end of a hot gruelling summer, the creek flats at Brookfield

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indicate the presence of moisture, after recent but sparse rains. Melbourne Water funded plants will be planted beside the creek here, after the weeds have been removed by Western Land Services.



Southern edge of storm drain at Brookfield

Similarly, the edges of the storm drain where we have been planting these past two years shows a similar green tinge. Plants supplied by other sources (ie. Western Water & Dame Phyllis Frost Centre) will be planted beside the storm drain. The Poa grasses we planted by the drain last year are still growing.

Park Bench at Brookfield

The Brookfield residents have mentioned to MEG that it would be nice to have a seat for people to sit down as they walked among the trees in the parkland beside the creek at Brookfield. Peter has arranged for a park bench donated to MEG. After it has been cleaned, stripped, sanded & varnished it should be ready to be placed at Brookfield. The refurbishing has been delegated to Doug & Daryl.

Trees saved by MEG at Arnolds Creek

In 2007 MEG & Melton Shire identified several naturally grown Yellow Box trees growing beside Arnolds Creek, beside the children's playground & across the road from our restoration site beside Brookfield Village. These were being regularly mown, & prevented from growing more than a few centimetres in height. We placed stakes & tree guards around the mown trees in November 2007. Council also identified Redleg Grasses that were being mown. We placed a line of guards to include the native grasses also. These trees are now thriving. After 6 years they are now between 6-7 metres tall! The native Redleg Grasses are also

thriving thanks to the line of treeguards. This ensured that the native grasses are not mowed but are maintained separately & sensitively as creekside native grassland. There are also native groundcovers (Desmodium & Dichondra) in this enclosed area. This further enhances the biodiversity value of the Arnolds Creek Biolink corridor.



Before: Flo, Peter & Carmen staking trees in 2008



After: Jacqui with the same trees in 2014



Doug & Carmen guarding trees at Brookfield 2013

In 2013 we guarded more tree seedlings, at Brookfield.

Those trees we guarded beside Clarkes Road in Melton South are also growing well, about a metre tall after one year. We have since guarded similarly mown trees at our site beside the Village, in 2013; & plan to guard more this year at Brookfield. It is demonstrably much easier to guard naturally grown plants than to plant new ones. Guarding these trees is a once only job, thereby avoiding the time & expense of purchasing, planting & then watering new plants.

COMING MEG EVENTS

Strathtulloh Woodland

Saturday 12th April 9.00 – 11.00

There will be a birdwalk at Strathtulloh Woodland, along the paved walking track (no bushwalking required). We should hopefully see a variety of woodland birds. Walking will be easy (no bushwalking required). Please wear appropriate clothes and sturdy shoes.

—Drive south from Melton along Exford Road, to Exford
 —Turn left at T intersection at bottom of the hill
 —Drive up the hill to Red Gum Road (1st road on left – opposite Butlers Road)
 —Turn left into Red Gum Road then turn left at T intersection into Strathtulloh Circuit
 —Continue along Strathtulloh Circuit past Greens Road
 —Meet in Strathtulloh Circuit in:
 Melway Page 343 Ref A12

Brookfield Working bee

Sunday 13th April 10.00 – 12.00

MEG will have a working bee at Brookfield, prior to beginning planting again this winter. Probably removing Galenia or moving mulch (depending upon rainfall).

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 very child friendly. Melways Map 336 Ref G11.

MEG BIRD GROUP 2014

Beginners who have had no prior involvement in bird watching are welcome on MEG bird walks, as well as more experience bird watchers. 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 birdwalks are on:

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

Hannah Watts Park Saturday 10 th May 9.00 – 11.00	Toolern Creek (Big Red) Sunday 15 th June 9.00 – 11.00
Toolern Regional Park Sunday 20 th July 9.00 -11.00	Arnolds Creek: Brookfield Saturday 23 rd August 9 – 11.00
Melton Gilgai Woodland Saturday 13 th September 9- 11.00	Eynesbury Forest Saturday 11 th October 9 – 11.00
Long Forest Mallee Saturday 15 th November 9-11.00	

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

Twitching at Toolern Vale

Saturday 3rd May 10.00 – 12.30

In Heritage week 2014 there is an event called "Twitching at Toolern Vale" on Saturday 3rd May that involves a trip to the Vern Davey hut and then a talk from Marilyn Hewish, Nora Peters and Bob Winthers. This event is a celebration of all things bird. The wooded hills of Toolern Vale and Long Forest have been a mecca for bird watchers, since the 1920's. Join other local twitchers for bird watching at "The Naturalist's Cabin" built by Vernon Davey in 1933.

Meet bus at Melton Civic Centre Car Park, 232 High Street, Melton Vic 3337

For information and booking (**essential!**) see:
http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Out_n_About/Events/Events_calendar/Twitching_in_Toolern_Vale_Bird_watching; Other events that are on as part of Heritage week include:

http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Out_n_About/Arts_culture_heritage/Heritage/Heritage_week;

There is a detailed description of the Bird Hut in 'Birds of the Long Forest 1889 – 2005' & more info on:

http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=MU933255.pdf;

COMING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

5th Victorian Weeds Conference

Tuesday-Thursday 13-15 May Geelong.

There is a range of sessions for those who have an interest in weeds that may be found in grasslands and grassy woodlands. One session looks at native vegetation herbicide tolerance and

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regeneration, other topics relate to Chilean Needle-grass, blackberry and serrated tussock to name a few. There is also a conference dinner excursion to Mount Rothwell. Registration is now open. Information: 0437 861 449, secwssv@surf.net.au;

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Cement Mixer stolen from FoMBG



John Bentley of Friends of Melton Botanic Garden writes:

'Has anyone seen this hand-driven cement mixer? It was stolen from one of the depot sheds on 25 March 2014. It is a 70 year old Kelso cement mixer that we use. A number of other items were stolen including Solo backpack spray units 15L, hose reels and connections. They may appear for sale on some website or in some of the pawn shops. Very sad that people would steal from a community group.'

Contact John Bentley of FoMBG if you see this cement mixer.

Western Melbourne Catchments Network

List of birds in the Werribee catchment

Western Melbourne Catchments Network (WMCN) has compiled a list of birds found locally, in the Werribee catchment, (330 species!). This can be found on the WMRN website:

<http://www.wmcn.org.au/birds#bird-list>;

Who Needs Nature?

Online survey of Melbourne residents

Lucy Taylor (PhD candidate) is running an online survey of Melbourne residents to see if they think their local area's biodiversity impacts their wellbeing: www.whoneedsnature.com.

'I am writing to seek your support.

The survey is part of my doctoral research at the University of Sydney, in collaboration with the University of Melbourne and The Royal Botanic

Gardens, Melbourne. The research will involve using GIS to map biodiversity indicators, census demographic data, and the survey results across four cities (Wellington and Auckland and New Zealand, and Sydney and Melbourne in Australia). The aim is to see whether biodiversity impacts urban residents' wellbeing, and to compare these results between cities and countries in Oceania. A great deal of this sort of work has occurred in Europe, Asia and the US, but not as much in our area.

'The survey is voluntary, for residents of Melbourne who are at least 18 years of age. The survey will be live until May 2014. The survey asks:

1. *How people interact with nature;*
2. *How they value nature;*
3. *What they know about their local nature; and*
4. *Some general wellbeing and demographic questions.*

'If you have any suggestions about publicising the survey and/or ways that might increase awareness of it (e.g., Council social media or Council newsletters perhaps?), I would be very appreciative. I am happy to provide posters, postcards, or cards/flyers such as <http://whoneedsnature.com/library/WhoNeedsNature-A4-Melbourne.pdf>; If you have suggestions about other people who may be able to help increase awareness of the survey, please let me know.

'I will also be running a series of focus groups during the first week of September at the University of Melbourne. The aim is to answer any questions that come up during the survey. Should you have any suggestions about topics that might benefit your work or that you think might be relevant, I would be pleased to take them.

'Should you have any questions, please let me know. I appreciate your support.

Kind regards, Lucy'

Lucy Taylor, Doctoral Candidate, University of Sydney, Room 410 Heydon-Laurence building (A08), The University of Sydney, NSW, 2006
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E l.taylor@sydney.edu.au,
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Too many forests, too many national parks!

'The Australian' newspaper reports:

'The Prime Minister last night said the nation had "quite enough national parks" and the government would not support "further lockups of our forests".

"We have quite enough national parks. We have quite enough locked up forests already. In fact, in an important respect, we have too much locked up forest," Mr Abbott told forestry industry representatives in Canberra.

"We don't support, as a government and as a Coalition, further lockups of our forests. We just don't support it."

Mr Abbott's government has asked the UN World Heritage Committee to delist 74,000 of the 170,000 hectares proposed for protection under Tasmania's forest peace deal.

Mr Abbott also vowed to set up a new advisory council to support the timber industry. '
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/labor-greens-attack-tony-abbott-for-saying-nations-forests-too-locked-up/story-fn59niix-1226845685829>;

Climate Council: The Angry Summer

<http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/angry-summer>;

'This report provides a summary of extreme weather conditions in the 2013/2014 summer, illuminating a continuing trend of hotter summers & more weather extremes in Australia.

'Continuing hot on the heels of the 'Angry Summer' of 2012/2013, Australians again endured record-breaking extreme events this summer. Drought conditions affected inland eastern Australia, while parts of the north & west of the country experienced above average rainfall. There was an early start to the bushfire season in New South Wales, & parts of South Australia, Western Australia & Victoria were ravaged by fires. Prolonged & intense heatwaves were experienced in major population centres, including Adelaide, Canberra & Melbourne.

'Over the 2013/2014 summer numerous extreme weather -related records were broken across Australia'

Five Key Findings

- Heatwaves & hot days, drought & rainfall deficiency, & bushfires dominated the 2013/2014 summer.
- Climate change is already increasing the intensity & frequency of extreme weather events in Australia.
- Many of our largest population centres stand out as being at increased risk from extreme weather events, including heatwaves, drought & bushfires.
- The impacts of extreme weather events on people, property, communities & the environment are serious & costly.
- Limiting the increase in extreme weather activity requires urgent & deep reductions in the emissions of greenhouse gases. The decisions we make this decade will largely determine the severity of climate change & its influence on extreme events for our grandchildren. This is the critical decade.'

Read the full report on:

<http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/uploads/ff37af7492b4b698420c1aebdaed54a0.pdf>;

Climate Council

Heatwaves: Hotter, Longer, More Often

This Climate Council report states:

'Our latest report finds hot weather in Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra has already reached levels predicted for 2030.

'The report examines the impact of climate change on heatwaves and hot weather in Australia and around the world.

"When looking at heatwaves over the last 60 years things are getting worse. In a stable climate that would not be happening" — Prof. Tim Flannery

FIVE TOP FACTS

1. Climate change is already increasing the intensity and frequency of heatwaves in Australia. Heatwaves are becoming hotter, lasting longer and occurring more often. Climate change is making heatwaves worse in terms of their impacts on people, property, communities and the environment. Heatwaves have widespread impacts, ranging from direct impacts on our health to damage to ecosystems, agriculture and infrastructure.
2. The climate system has shifted, and is continuing to shift, increasing the likelihood of more extreme hot weather.

3. *Record hot days and heatwaves are expected to increase in the future*
4. *Limiting the increase in heatwave activity requires urgent and deep reductions in the emissions of greenhouse gases.*

"This is the critical decade if we want to prevent heatwaves getting even worse" — Prof. Tim Flannery. <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/2014/02/13/heatwaves-report/>;

OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS

Nominate now for the National NAIDOC Awards

Ed Story, International Indigenous Volunteer Network (IIVN) Coordinator, writes:

NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to come together to recognise the valuable contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to this country. This year, NAIDOC Week will be held from 6-13 July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Indigenous peoples. The 2014 National NAIDOC Awards will be announced at a ceremony on the Gold Coast. The National NAIDOC Awards recognize Indigenous artists, scholars, sportspeople, elders and community members and highlights their commitments and contributions. Nominating someone for a National NAIDOC Award is a great chance to acknowledge an outstanding and talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. There are 10 categories to choose from: Lifetime Achievement Award, Person of the Year, Female Elder of the Year, Male Elder of the Year, Caring for Country Award, Youth of the Year, Artist of the Year, Scholar of the Year, Apprentice of the Year and Sportspeople of the Year. National NAIDOC Committee co-chairs Anne Martin and Benjamin Mitchell are calling on communities around the country to nominate inspirational leaders, talented sportspeople, creative artists, academics and apprentices, community members, elders and environmentalists.

"Being nominated for a national NAIDOC Award is a real honour and it's a wonderful opportunity to showcase all of our successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," Mr Mitchell said.

"For a lot of people in our community, the highlight of NAIDOC Week is coming to the National NAIDOC Awards. Everyone is really proud of all

the award nominees and winners. It's really special to be given national recognition for their commitment within their nominated field," Ms Martin said.

Nominations for the 2014 National NAIDOC Awards close on **Wednesday 23 April**.

For entry forms and more information, visit www.naidoc.org.au or talk to your nearest Indigenous Coordination Centre on 1800 079 098,

MELTON WILDLIFE

Brown Earwig (*Labidura truncata*) at Brookfield

This native earwig was found under the rubbish in the storm drain next to the kinder carpark. It was quite boldly marked & almost 3 cm in length, quite unlike the common introduced ones we usually see. It kept its cerci raised up high in a threatening manner. Probably a Brown Earwig (*Labidura truncata*) as this seems to be the commonly widespread species according to:

<http://www.minibeastwildlife.com.au/Earwigs.htm>;
<http://www.ento.csiro.au/education/insects/dermaptera.html>; &
http://www.ces.csiro.au/aicn/system/c_1091.htm;

According to CSIRO '*Labidura truncata* is a large native earwig that prefers to feed on soft-bodied caterpillars both larger and smaller than themselves. It grabs caterpillars with its pincers and holds it there while feeding. *L. truncata* may also feed on other insects, including other earwigs if it is hungry enough.'



Native earwig at Brookfield



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