

MELTON ENVIRONMENT GROUP

No. AOO4OO49F

A.B.N 47 411575097

PO BOX 481 MELTON 3337

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER JULY 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](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 18th July

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

JUNE

The first day of Winter was suitably wintry. Grey & overcast, with rain most of the day. After several dry weeks in May the imminent need for watering was averted with continued rains in June!

MEG EVENTS IN JUNE

World Environment Day:

City of Melton Environmental Grants

On World Environment Day local community environmental groups were awarded grants of \$1000 each. MEG will use this grant to conduct bird awareness activities during Bird Week (18- 24 October).

MEG activities in Bird Week will include:

- Education about local birds & wildlife
- Education about local rare & endangered birds
- Why our environment is important
- Birdlife & wildlife requirements
- Bird watching in Melton
- Guest speakers
- Information on local birds in digital format
- Bird walk

As people become more aware of our local birdlife & wildlife this will also hopefully create a desire to protect it.

Weeding at Brookfield

On Tuesday 10th June Daryl of MEG & John of the Brookfield Village Residents landcare group met at Brookfield to do some weeding at the residents' site beside the freeway. Removing plantain, wireweed & carpet weed is a tiresome but necessary task. Several Red Gum seedlings have appeared in the site, no doubt from the stand of

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

Red Gums just outside the perimeter fence. There are also some unidentified gum tree seedlings.



The residents regularly maintain & weed these sites. Western Water have funded further plants for this site which will be planted here soon, at a date to be determined.

Bird walk at Toolern Creek (Big Red Park)



On Saturday 15th June, 6 people (Geraldine, Flo & Daryl of MEG & three more) participated in a bird walk in South Melton, along Toolern Creek. There is a footpath that runs along the creek, providing easy walking.

The weather was cold, hence the heavy coats. However, the morning rain drifted away at about 9.00 so we departed in relatively dry sunny weather. The creek was running freely, compliments of the recent rainy weather.

The creek forms a corridor for birds & other wildlife through Melton, from Toolern Vale in the north to the Toolern Regional Park in the south, thence to the Werribee River. Toolern Creek has been

restored over several years, with many thousands of indigenous plants having been planted by Friends of Toolern Creek.

Litter traps have been installed at storm water outlets to keep rubbish from the creek. Reed beds trap pollution and sediment, preventing it flowing into the River and ultimately Port Philip Bay. Plantings by the water's edge keep detritus from the creek.



Litter trap at Toolern Creek

Flo pointed out a small hanging bird nest beside the creek. Geraldine identified this as a Mistletoebird nest! Although these brightly coloured birds are quite common they are rarely seen as they usually live in the treetops & foliage. A new species for Toolern Creek!

Geraldine also mentioned that there were several Blue Wrens now in residence at Little Blind Creek, close to where MEG conducted extensive plantings several years ago. Blue Wrens had previously been absent from Little Blind Creek so it is good that they have colonised the creek. Stream side understory plantings by City of Melton, Melbourne Water & MEG have no doubt facilitated their return.

We saw 18 bird species, (adding the Mistletoe Bird to the list) possibly due to the cold damp weather. However, those birds we did see still dramatically illustrate part of the rich diversity of bird species, both along Toolern Creek & in Melton.

Rainbow Lorikeet	Red-rumped Parrot
Long-billed Corella	Black Duck Wood Duck
Domestic Pigeon	Crested Pigeon Turtledove
New Holland Honeyeater	White plumed Honeyeater
Red Wattlebird	Willy Wagtail Magpie

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Mudlark	Indian Mynah	Starling
Little Raven	Mistletoe Bird	

A total of 57 birds species have been recorded at Toolern Creek :

Little Pied Cormorant	Darter	White-faced Heron
Straw-necked Ibis	Greater Egret	Wood Duck
Black Duck	Whistling Kite	Kestrel
Black-shouldered Kite	Brown Goshawk	Brown Falcon
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Australian Hobby	Coot
Purple Swamphen	Dusky Moorhen	Masked Lapwing
Crested Pigeon	Spotted Dove	Domestic Pigeon
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Galah	Little Corella
Long-billed Corella	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Rainbow Lorikeet	Musk Lorikeet
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Little Lorikeet	Cockatiel
Red-rumped Parrot	Crimson Rosella	Eastern Rosella
Pallid Cuckoo	Sacred Kingfisher	Blackbird
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Blue Wren	Willie-wagtail
White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Red Wattlebird
White-plumed Honeyeater	New Holland Honeyeater	
Australasian Magpie	Magpie-lark	Little Raven
Common Myna	European Starling	House Sparrow
Red-browed Firetail	Greenfinch	Goldfinch
Welcome Swallow		

Western Land Services weeding Arnolds Creek



Tributary creek sprayed & brushcut by WLS

The small tributary creek at Brookfield has been sprayed & brushcut by Western Land Services (WLS), funded by Melbourne Water Grant to the Brookfield Residents landcare group. The grant will fund also weed matting for the creek side as well as plants, tools & equipment for use by the residents group.

WLS removed the Phalaris & Carpet Weed from the tiny Grey Box Grassy Woodland remnant at Brookfield between the Leisure Centre & the tributaries. The large windows of the Leisure Centre look out into this small picturesque woodland so it is of high visibility. As it is lacking in

understory, indigenous wildflowers & understory plants will be planted here. These will include Eutaxia, Indigofera, Templetonia, Melicytis, Eremophila, Bursaria Gold-dust Wattle etc. The woodland has been fenced off by treeguards to prevent the future access of mowers, to allow revegetation by the Brookfield Residents Landcare group. A four metre access track for mowing & works along the creek will be left between the woodland & the Leisure Centre fence.



Small remnant Grey Box Woodland at Brookfield

WLS also removed Phalaris & other weeds from the pretty little rock pool located behind the Leisure Centre. This pool will be planted with wetland plants & wildflowers, such as Juncus, Billy Buttons, Marsh Marigolds etc.



Brookfield rock pool

WLS have also sprayed & bush cut almost the whole eastern creekside of Arnolds Creek between Black Dog Drive & the Village bridge!

Mid-Winter Planting at Brookfield

On Saturday 21st June MEG marked the Winter Solstice by planting on the shortest day of the year at Brookfield, beside the Black Dog Drive Bridge. Twelve people, Carmen, Geraldine, Flo, Doug,

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Daryl & Jenny of MEG, Don, Ron, John, Lois of Brookfield Village with Sue & Michael from Bacchus Marsh) participated in the event & planted over 600 trees, bushes, grasses & rushes. Mass plantings of Poas should hopefully help prevent the return here of weeds.

These included:

Acacia provincialis	Golden Wattle
Acacia verticillata	Blue Box
Leptospermum lanigerum	Dodonea cuneata
Callistemon sieberi	Lomandra longifolia
Poa labilliere	



Planting at Brookfield



Lunch at Brookfield

Planting was easy as the ground was soft & wet after recent rains & the weeds had been removed by Western Land Services. In fact no watering was required due to the wet conditions! Soaking rains the following Monday morning should ensure their survival. Our local mascot bird, the Willie Wagtail with no eyebrows, inspected the new plants in detail as we finished, no doubt hoping for uncovered worms!

Plant purchases for creekside revegetation here at Brookfield, as well recent massive weed control works by Western Land Services, were all funded by Melbourne Water under the River Health Incentives Program, for environmental work along Arnolds Creek, as part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project. Many thanks to Melbourne Water for this opportunity to restore Arnolds Creek!

Coincidentally, June 21st was also the inaugural World Giraffe Day

http://www.giraffeconservation.org/our_news.php?pgid=79;

COMING MEG EVENTS

Bird Walk at Toolern Regional Park

Saturday 19th July 9.00 – 11.00

Bridge Rd (beside bridge) Melway 343 Ref B5

Planet Ark Treeplanting Day

Sunday 27th July 10.00 – 12.00 Brookfield

MEG will be participating in Planet Ark Treeplanting Day once more planting 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. The site is very child friendly.

Free indigenous plants will be given away to participants! Hot & cold drinks, & snacks will be supplied. Melways Map 336 Ref G11.

Bird Walk at Arnolds Creek: Brookfield

Saturday 23rd August 9.00 – 11.00

MEG will host a bird walk beside Arnolds Creek 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 Melways Map 336 Ref G11.

Melton Gilgai Woodland

Saturday 13th September 9.00 – 11.00

The woodland is in *Harkness Road*
Melway 330 Ref B11

Bunnings Spring Launch

Saturday 13th September.

MEG will participate in Bunnings Spring Launch again this year. Brookfield Village resident's landcare group will also be participating. The

Brookfield residents are now active participants in the environmental restoration of Arnolds Creek.

Blackwood: BBQ & picnic

Sunday 7th December

MEG will have our end of year BBQ & picnic at Blackwood this year on Sunday 7th December. Sausages & bread supplied by MEG. Meet at Blackwood Hotel corner at 10.00. BYO salads & dessert. Please advise of special dietary requirements. We will have our customary walk.

Bird Week in Melton

18th – 24th October

MEG will be conducting bird awareness activities during Bird Week, funded by City of Melton's Environment Day grant.

Bird Week is held every year in the third week of October. Dates for National Bird Week 2014: 18- 24 October. Every October, BirdLife Australia organises and promotes Bird Week with the goal of inspiring Australians to take action and get involved in bird conservation efforts.

<http://birdlife.org.au/get-involved/whats-on/bird-week>;

Eynesbury Forest Bird Walk

Sunday 26th October 9.00 – 11.00

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

Long Forest Mallee Bird Walk

Sunday 9th November 9.00 – 11.00

On Sunday 9th October Melton Environment Group will host a bird walk in Long Forest Mallee LFM. Long Forest Road Melway 335 Ref E3

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

FMBG: NAIDOC Week Walk

Friday 11th July 10am Melton Botanic Garden

Friends of Melton Botanic Garden. During NAIDOC Week take a guided walk through the Melton Botanic Garden to see local indigenous plants from the Melton region. The gentle walk is 1½ hours followed by morning tea. Highlights are the natural features & remnant vegetation, Ryans Creek indigenous plantings, the Koorie Garden designed by Melton Koorie primary & secondary students, indigenous plantings at the lake & the Victorian Volcanic Plains garden. Friday 11th July 10.00 – 11.30 followed by morning tea. Meet at

depot, corner of Tullidge & William Streets.

Bookings essential. Contact John Bentley 9743 3819 or friends@fmbg.org.au;

Birding at Pinkerton & Eynesbury:

Sunday August 17th 09.15

Birdlife Australia & PLEG invite 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. For more info: Dave Torr: 9749 5141 or davidtorr@gmail.com; Mob 0458 035 896 (BLA), www.birdlife.org.au/events; Melway Map 221 ref H8 Gates open 9.15am, walk starts 9.30:

Project Hindmarsh Planting weekend

16th & 17th August

Helena Lindorf writes:

'Chris and I would like to invite you along to the Project Hindmarsh Planting weekend, to be held on the 16th and 17th August. This year we are excited to be part of the weekend, not only as volunteers but as landholders. The weekend will see over 15,000 indigenous seedlings being planted on our place at Lot 1 Amy Johnson Hwy, Rainbow. We've purchased the property over 3 years ago as a restoration project.

Chris and I both work in the environment industry and we thought that we could contribute to landscape change by doing what we preach. Chris has put together some information about the property on the landcare network website:

<http://www.hindmarshlandcare.org.au/index.php/project-hindmarsh/site-information-2014>

We would love it, if you could come along and help us with our restoration project. To register for the event, please visit the Hindmarsh Landcare Network website:

<http://www.hindmarshlandcare.org.au/index.php/project-hindmarsh/register-project-hindmarsh-2014-16-17-august>

Registrations fill up pretty quickly, so if you're interested, jump in quick to secure your place. The weekend is a great way of making your contribution to the environment, have some fun while you're at it, meet some wonderful people, catch up with old friends and get fed some yummy

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local tucker while being entertained by the local musicians (our neighbours!).

Hope to see you there. Cheers,
Helena, Chris, Charlotte and Bethany Lindorff

9th Annual Grow West Tree Planting

9.30 am - 4.30 pm Sunday 20th July

Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee and Port Phillip & Westernport CMA

Grow West was created to restore badly eroded landscapes in the Bacchus Marsh area. Help plant 6,000 native seedlings on Yaloak Estate in the Rowsley Valley as part of the large landscape change project. It's a great day out. Victorian Mobile Landcare Group will provide transportation around the site. Registrations will be open in June <http://www.growwest.com.au>; Info: Helena Lindorff helena.lindorff@ppwcma.vic.gov.au; 0437 195 511

National Tree Day - Large scale revegetation Sunday 27th July

Sydenham Park, Melbourne's Outer West

With rabbit numbers now under control we can now think about large scale revegetation, and ask your help. We have the ambitious target of 3000 trees, so we need as many hands as possible planting, as well as volunteers who can be team leaders. Victorian Mobile Landcare Group will provide transportation around the site.

Information & Team Leader Interest: Martha Ragg
Brimbank Council 03 9249 4717

marthar@brimbank.vic.gov.au;

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Platypus at Werribee

Threatened by discarded rubbish

Stefanie Wabnik of Melbourne Water writes:

"Hello All, I'm happy to announce that an untagged male platypus was recorded in the Werribee River (lower) last Thursday night. Unfortunately, he had a band around his neck. It was removed and there was no serious damage and was quickly released."

Josh Griffiths (<http://cesaraustralia.com/>) commented:

"It's disappointing that we have caught a number of entangled animals around Melbourne over the past 12-18 months. With numbers so low in Werribee, the loss of even one animal can have dramatic impact on the population."

It would be great if you could also promote platypusSPOT.org for people to submit sightings so we can learn a bit more about platypus

occurrence throughout the area."



Platypus in Werribee with plastic band

Josh and I welcome ideas to try and stop these preventable deaths. Please contact me with your thoughts.

Stefanie Wabnik, River Health Officer for the Werribee and Little River Catchments, Waterways & Land (Service Delivery Group) Melbourne Water

Plastic rings carelessly discarded eventually find their way into creeks & rivers via the stormwater system. They then present a fatal trap for wildlife. If a Platypus puts its head through a band or ring such as this, in the murky water, the Platypus is doomed to die a painful & lingering death as the band cuts inexorably into its neck.

MELTON WILDLIFE

Raptor Attack in the suburbs!

Whistling Kite at Brookfield

Recently a Whistling Kite was observed at Brookfield being pursued noisily by 3 Magpies. It dived into the creek side trees beside the tiny

remnant Grey Box Woodland, with a bird in its talons. Initial reaction was that the identification must be mistaken, & the raptor must have been a Brown Goshawk. Brown Goshawks & Collared Sparrowhawks are commonly seen in Melton, both along our creeks & in gardens. A few minutes later it flew off, dropping the bird between the fence of the recreation centre & the creek. However it was definitely a Whistling Kite, about twice the size as the Magpies. As it took off it dropped the bird, circling into the Red Gums. The air was then filled with noisy bird cries as the large raptor flew over the trees, Rainbow Lorikeets being the most raucous of these.



Pigeon dropped by Whistling Kite at Brookfield

The large raptor was gone too quickly for a photo but the dropped bird found to be a Domestic Pigeon. However Whistling Kites are not known for taking birds. They are more commonly seen feeding on carrion or rabbits.

However, one theory is that this may be evidence of avian piracy. Whistling Kites have been observed pirating food from other birds. A few years ago a White-bellied Sea-eagle was seen taking a fish from the Melton Reservoir. As it rose into the air a Whistling Kite immediately took off from a tree overlooking the reservoir & headed toward the sea-eagle. As it approached more closely it veered off & returned to its roost, presumably assessing the much larger size of the sea-eagle. Several falcons are seen in Melton. Australasian Hobbies are Melton residents, commonly seen in gardens & at Woodgrove; as well as nesting beside the Senior Citizens Club & Melton Railway Station. Peregrine Falcons are occasionally seen in Melton & a Black Falcon was seen in Melton South recently. Peregrine Falcons regularly prey on pigeons. Last year a Brown

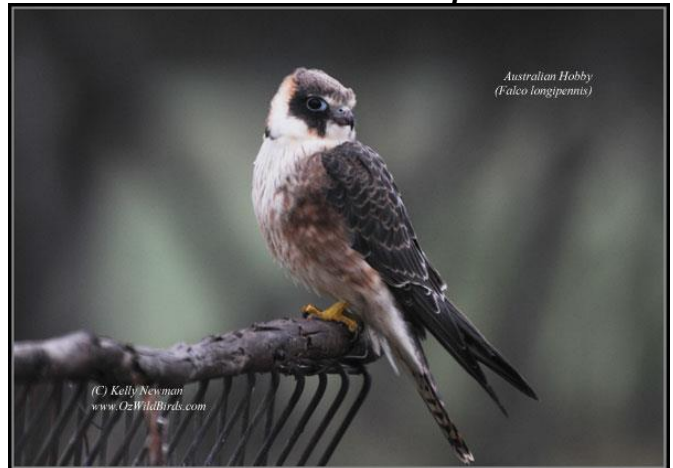
Goshawk was seen feeding on a Crested Pigeon in Pinkerton Forest.

A new species for Brookfield & a brief insight into raptor behaviour in the middle of Melton.



Whistling Kite in Eynesbury Forest

'Hunter around our chicken coop!!'



Australian Hobby in Melton by Nora Peters

A recent email from Sandra Akers, in the far east of Melbourne (Park Orchards to be exact) demonstrates that wildlife is also alive & well on the opposite fringe of Melbourne.

*"Hi Daryl,
We have eagles around here... and have had some encounters (quite gory) with a bird of prey around our chicken coop, which Ilaria thinks is an Australian Hobby. She says it has a round head, looks longish when sitting in a tree, has a dark greyish back and brown fluffy front with fluff all the way down its legs and yellow feet. The chickens hide under the trampoline when they see it. It loves catching the smaller birds. Any other*

ideas as to what it might be? It has a wingspan close to a metre

We think it is a hobby because of its colouring. We got the picture I sent you from the internet. Ilaria says it actually sits straighter than the Hobby ie more like a Hawk does. She says the grey back colouring and fluffy brown front makes it look more like a hobby. Are there any other birds it could be? And I think you are right, it doesn't go for the chickens. It might be scared of the bird netting I placed across most of the top of the coop. The little birds come in and then try to fly through the cyclone wire holes and the Hobby waits for them and gets them. I suppose it's cruel but I like to think we are helping it to stay in the burbs. Earlier this year we think a baby bird of prey got stuck in the coop and its parent must have flown in to help it. Mum found them both dead in the coop with the chickens eating the baby. Our chickens are quite tough ... Isa browns. . Those two had speckled grey plumage. Ilaria is going to try to take a photo of it next time it comes around. Mum is scared of it. I like having it around."

Dave Torr of Birdlife Australia advises:

"Yes, I doubt a Hobby would take a chicken but all birds seems to be able to recognise raptors and get frightened. Most common bird hunter around Melbourne would be the Brown Goshawk - Grey are pretty uncommon."



Juvenile Brown Goshawk at Harkness Road

Noisy Miners arrive in Pinkerton Forest

The Noisy Miner is an aggressive and noisy bird (hence its name). It is a light grey colour, with black face and yellow bill.

The Noisy Miner is found in Hannah Watts Park and sometimes along Little Blind Creek, but it appears to be declining in numbers. It is still common in Grey Box/Yellow Gum woodland in Melton Gilgai Woodland Harkness Road & in Long Forest Mallee. However it is absent from other local woodlands such as Eynesbury Forest. A few were seen in the Exford area, in roadside trees in the 1980's but these have long since disappeared.

However it was recently discovered in Pinkerton Forest in 2014 during the Birdlife Australia quarterly bird survey in February, led by Dave Torr. Since then about four birds seem to have made a permanent home there. Their presence is made obvious by their noisy calls. How they found their way here is something of a mystery as they are absent from nearby Eynesbury Forest and the nearest populations are in Melton and Long Forest Mallee.

This is another example that native bird populations & distributions are dynamic & constantly changing. The recent appearance of Diamond Firetails in Melton Gilgai Woodland in May 2014 is another example of this.

Detailed analysis of records of the Birdlife Australia quarterly bird surveys over a 10 year period by Dave Torr have resulted in several important conclusions.



Noisy Miner at Hannah Watts Park in Melton