



Remnant woodland beside Arnolds Creek at Brookfield Village

East & West branches of Arnolds Creek converge south-east of the corner of Coburns Road & the Western Highway. Brookfield Lifestyle Retirement Village is situated on both sides of Arnolds Creek at this point, on Coburns Road. Between this wetland & Black Dog Drive the creek runs through a small remnant mixed Red Gum / Grey Box / Yellow Box woodland. The narrow point of land where these branches converge contains an even smaller Grey Box woodland remnant.

This picturesque site is ideally suited to environmental restoration. The mix of wetland & woodland will provide habitat for a variety of native wildlife, as well as providing a valuable link in the project to create a biodiversity corridor along Arnolds creek through Melton. The creek that has been completely reworked as a consequence of extensive earthworks provides both a challenge for restoration & a blank page for wetland restoration.



Earthworks at Arnolds Creek prior to building April 2007



Initial works by Western Water at Brookfield

In 2008 Melbourne Water conducted extensive works cleaning up Arnolds Creek in the vicinity of Brookfield Village. Weeds, woody weeds, debris & accumulated silt were removed to enable water to flow freely once again.

Darren Coughlan (Werribee Catchment Waterway Coordinator for Melbourne Water) suggested: *"It would be a good opportunity for Melton Environment Group and the residents from the Brookfield Estate, with Melton Council to come together for a planting day"*.

Melton Environment Group (MEG) discussed the suggestion of joining with residents from the Brookfield Estate in a planting day, at our February meeting. The meeting endorsed & welcomed participation in this project as Arnolds Creek is a focus of our activities (along with Little Blind Creek & Navan Park). This project will create another link in a biodiversity corridor along Arnolds Creek, from Harkness Road in the north, through Melton, to the Melton Reservoir in Melton South.

This picturesque site, with its remnant large Red Gums, Grey & Yellow Box & small Grey Box woodland remnant beside the newly created wetland, is a prime site for revegetation. It should become both an attractive park & wildlife refuge. This site could become an important (if small) wetland, which could provide a valuable refuge for water wildlife in times of prolonged drought or effects of global warming. Intermittent creeks such as Arnolds Creek are dependent upon permanent pools for the survival of its aquatic wildlife.

When this wetland is planted with indigenous vegetation it will form a wetland habitat with a flourishing diversity of native wildlife, especially waterbirds. The wetland may be a suitable site for duck nest boxes in the future. A permanent wetland would also become a major drought refuge for creek life. Dense plantings of water plants should encourage more creek life, especially native fish & predatory insects that should control the breeding of mosquitoes. The expanse of water should also encourage bats, which consume vast quantities of mosquitoes. This site could also form part of a biodiversity corridor along Arnolds Creek through Melton.

Initial meeting at Brookfield June 2008



Initial meeting at Arnolds Creek at Brookfield prior to planting 2008

On Tuesday 17th June Carmen, Peter & Daryl of MEG participated in a meeting arranged by Linda Bradburn (Melton Shire Environmental Education Officer) & Mikala Peterson (Community Program Coordinator for Werribee Plains Waterwatch) with Brookfield residents John Dunne & John Brennan. Brookfield resident Anne Kent has already been testing for water quality in the adjacent Arnolds Creek for three months.

We discussed how Arnolds Creek is a corridor that flows almost entirely through Melton, linking Melton Gilgai Woodland (adjacent to Long Forest Mallee & nearby Pyrete Forest) to the Werribee River to the south of Melton. We also discussed the various environmental projects that MEG have been involved in at various sites along Arnolds Creek, in partnership with several local community groups. We walked over the site where we will be planting, hopefully in August. This is an impressive site where three small creeks merge (including both branches of Arnolds Creek) with great potential for restoration. Staff & residents at Brookfield Village have expressed interest in the wellbeing of this portion of Arnolds Creek that flows through their community, & its wildlife. Due to extensive earthworks the creekside is virtually bare soil, consisting mainly of weeds. Revegetation here is a necessity to improve the water quality of the water in the creek & also to avoid erosion & subsequent silting of the creek.

The developer supplied about 1000 indigenous plants for the site from Western Plains Flora:

<i>Allocasaurina verticillata</i>	<i>Acacia melanoxydon</i>	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>
<i>Eucalyptus baueriana</i>	<i>Eucalyptus microcarpa</i>	<i>Acacia retinodes</i>
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>
<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>	<i>Cassinia arcuata</i>	<i>Correa glabra</i>
<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>	<i>Rhagodia paradoxa</i>	<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>

Tree staking at Arnolds Creek March 2008



Flo, Peter & Carmen beside naturally regenerated trees staked & protected from mowing

On Saturday 15th March Carmen, Peter, Doug, Daryl & Peter Sell of MEG were joined by John Dunn (a resident of adjacent Brookfield Village) to stake tree saplings beside Arnolds Creek. Many small gum trees are trying to regenerate in the parkland beside Arnolds Creek & Black Dog Drive. But they were being mown as they are hard to see in the grass. It is easier & more effective to protect these existing trees than it is to buy new trees, plant, maintain, water them & hope they will survive. They appear quite healthy despite the grass mowers.

The day was warm & the ground was hard as concrete, but we still placed stakes & guards around trees on both sides of Black Dog Drive. Hopefully these trees will now grow quickly so that they will shortly not need the protection of the guards & stakes. Unfortunately this site has proved highly prone to vandalism, & several treeguards near the playground have been vandalized already. The treeguards beside Brookfield Village appear intact. John Dunn at Brookfield has offered to replace the vandalised guards.

Melton Shire have identified extensive native Redleg Grass growing beside Arnolds Creek immediately next to where we placed stakes treeguards around the natural Yellow Box trees that were regularly being mown. These were initially staked in November 2007 then again in March 2008, where vandalised guards were replaced. These small trees are now thriving. Melton Shire have suggested that a line of treeguards be placed here to identify the native grasses from the adjacent mixed grassland that is mowed & maintained as public

use parkland. This should ensure that the native grasses are not mowed but can be maintained separately & sensitively as creekside native grassland. It will ensure that native grasses can flower & seed.

This will further enhance the biodiversity value of the Arnolds Creek Biolink corridor.

Planting at Brookfield Thursday 21st August 2008



Sheltering from the rain at Brookfield, waiting for plants to arrive

Flo, Carmen, Peter, Doug & Daryl were joined by Linda Bradburn (Melton Shire Environmental Education Officer) in planting in the slippery mud. A Thiess work crew of four was also present.

MEG planted on the east bank while the Thiess crew planted on the west bank. While waiting for plants to arrive we sheltered from the rain under the bridge (mercifully free of trolls). However, as the rain continued the creek rose almost 30 cm, & was soon flowing vigorously under the bridge. The Thiess crew had to jump across the rapidly rising creek to reach the west bank. Two made it across while the other two landed in the creek. They valiantly continued planting, despite being cold, muddy & wet!

MEG planted several hundred plants on the eastern side of the creek & the Thiess crew planted the other side. By the weekend both banks were planted, including the creekside between the bridge & the freeway. Despite the unpleasant planting conditions, the weather was ideal for planting & no watering was needed. The prolonged rainfall should ensure the survival of the plants



Planting in the rain at Brookfield

ARNOLDS CREEK BIOLINK PROJECT BROOKFIELD SITE: 2009

Planning for 2009

Thanks to our two grants (Adopt A Park grant & Melbourne Water & PPW CMA grant) MEG's operating budget for revegetation in 2009 is \$12,625. We have placed orders for 5600 plants from Western Plains Nursery, selected from the local Creekline Grassy Woodland EVC.

MEG received a grant of \$7625 from Melbourne Water for revegetation & restoration works at Brookfield as part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project. The grant includes indigenous plants, site preparation, funding for CVA volunteers to help plant them, & a posthole digger. We have ordered 2000 plants for the Brookfield section of the Arnolds Creek Biolink project. We will be able to plant at our Arnolds Creek sites, as part of the Arnolds Creek biolink project ie. Melton Christian College in Brooklyn Rd & the Church of Jesus Christ's Latterday Saints in High St. We will also plant at Little Blind Creek & beside the small wetlands at Navan Park

After inspecting the site, Ian Taylor of Western Plains Flora (indigenous plant nursery) has suggested a selection of suitable plants for Brookfield, with suggested sites for planting also.

Ian identified several native plants at the site including *Eutaxia microphylla* (a prostrate pea ground cover) & native *Erodium*. We will be ordering plants from the grants based

on his advice.

Ian's suggestions are:

Drooping Sheokes

Acacia pycnantha

Schoenoplectus

Eutaxia microphylla

Dianella amoena

Senna

Acacia acinacea

Triglochin

Eutaxia diffusa

Mentha diemensis

Bursaria

Vittadinia

Cassinia arcuata

Rhagodia

Acacia implexa

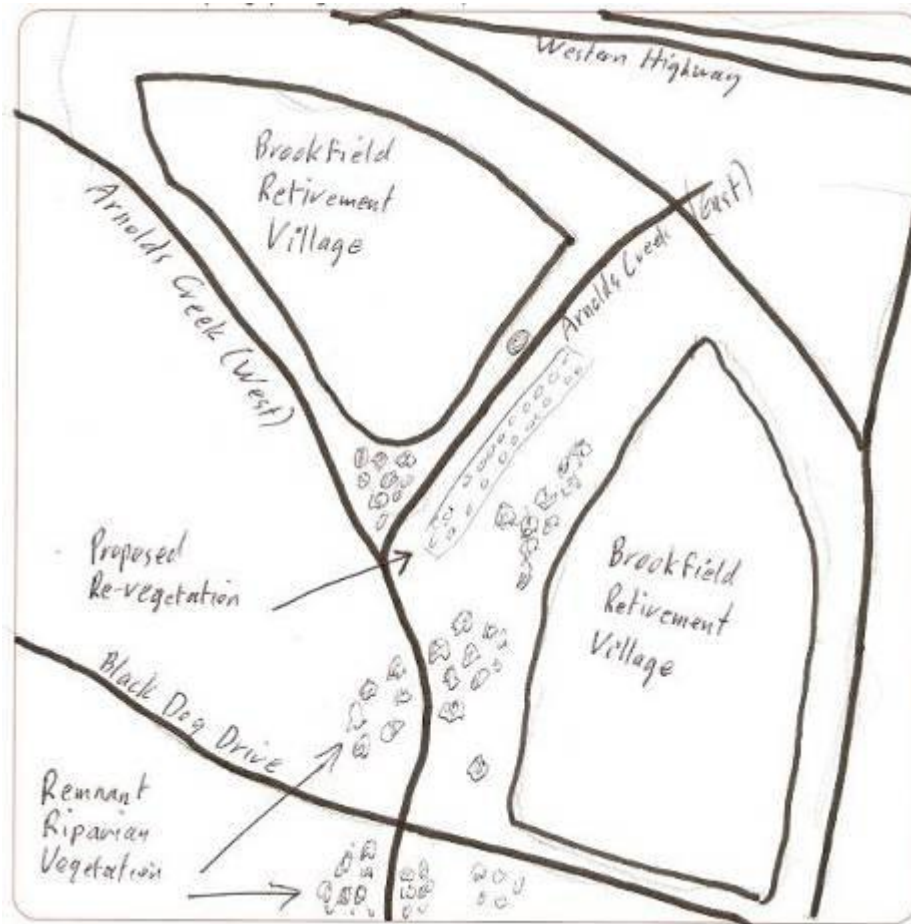
Lignum

Tree Violet

Indigofera



Eutaxia microphylla identified by Ian Taylor at Brookfield



Brookfield planting site

Planning for Wildlife at Brookfield

At the conclusion of work here constructing the retirement village, this site consisted completely of landfill & dumped soil. MEG's intention was to recreate habitat for native wildlife at this degraded site.

Bushy undergrowth should encourage Blue Wrens, Red-browed Finches & Yellow-tailed Thornbills (common at lower Arnolds Creek). Wattles, peas & sennas (& their seeds) may even encourage Bronzewing Pigeons (a pair of these lives at Little Blind Creek in Kurunjang & one was seen here early in 2009). Aquatic & emergent aquatics should provide cover for native fish, frogs & invertebrates, which may in turn attract herons, egrets & kingfishers (seen at lower Arnolds Creek & other local creeks in warmer months). Other birds found at lower Arnolds Creek (& other local creeks) such as Grey Fantails, Little Thornbills, Brown Goshawks, pardalotes, scrubwrens, & cuckoos etc, may return with the planting of more native vegetation.

Over 30 bird species have been observed in & around the Brookfield Village site to date. Hopefully this total will increase as native vegetation returns. Targeted revegetation may encourage bird species found in other areas of Melton (but not at Brookfield) to return. Brookfield Village residents often mention the variety of birds here & hope that our plantings will attract more active birds.

Birds that have been seen here include:

White-faced Heron,

Wood Duck
Black Duck
Masked Plover
Yellow-billed Spoonbill
Black-fronted Dotterel
Turtledove
Crested Pigeon,
Common Bronzewing
Galah
White Cockatoo
Rainbow Lorikeet
Long-billed Corella,
Purple-crowned Lorikeets
Musk Lorikeet
Eastern Rosella,
Red-rumped Parrot
Boobook Owl
Willy Wagtail
Red Wattlebird
White-plumed Honeyeater
Little Raven
Mudlark
Magpie
New Holland Honeyeater
Mynah
Starling
House Sparrow
Tree Sparrow
Welcome Swallow.
Yellow-billed Spoonbill
Kestrel

Wildlife requirements

There are a number of native wildlife species that we can realistically hope to attract here. Wildlife has a number of requirements in order for them to survive. Habitat requirements vary between species but the basic requirements are common to all living creatures, including humans (ie food, water, shelter, place to raise young). We must address these to attract wildlife.

Food

Planting native wildflowers, shrubs and trees will provide the foliage, nectar, pollen, berries, seeds, & insects that wildlife require to survive.

Water

Wildlife needs clean water for many purposes, including drinking, bathing and reproduction. The wetland provided by Arnolds Creek will provide this

Shelter

Wildlife needs shelter from people, predators and weather, such as native vegetation, tree hollows, shrubs, thickets or even dead trees.

A Place to Raise Their Young

Wildlife needs a sheltered place to raise their offspring. Many places for cover can double

as locations where wildlife can raise young, from wildflowers and bushes where many butterflies and moths lay their eggs, or tree hollows where bats, possums & birds can roost or nest.

Target wildlife species

Mammals

Brush-tailed Possum

Bats

Ring-tailed Possum

- *greater density of understory shrubs required first*
 - *wattles, teatrees, bottlebrush etc*

Birds

Yellow-tailed Thornbill

Little Thornbill

Silvereye

Blue Wren

Pardalotes

Weebill

Red-browed Finch

Cisticola

Sacred Kingfisher

Ibis

Brown Goshawk

Collared Sparrowhawk

Purple Swamphen

Coot

Dusky Moorhen

Masked Plover

Barn Owl

Boobook Owl

Crakes & Rails

Grey Shrike-thrush

Pallid Cuckoo

Horsfield Bronze-cuckoo

Tawny Frogmouth

Mistletoe Bird

Woodswallows

White-winged Triller

Lathams Snipe

Frogs

Whistling Treefrog

Growling Grass Frog

Reptiles

Bluetongue Lizard

Garden Skinks

Striped Skink

Tussock Skink

Marbled Gecko

Cunninghams Skink

Possums are absent from this site at present. Brushtailed Possums are resident in lower Arnolds Creek (below Brookfield Road). Nest hollows for native wildlife will be enhanced by placement of appropriate nest boxes. There are many ancient gum trees here with natural hollows but the provision of nest boxes should improve nesting opportunities for birds such as ducks, owls, parrots, galahs, corellas & possums. Large boxes may even be suitable for cockatoos & kookaburras, as these require very large hollows.

Riparian & aquatic plantings will enhance the site as frog habitat. 2 frog species are found at Brookfield at present, but this should increase with appropriate planting, as 7 frogs are found in Melton to date.

Red Gums, Blue Box, Woolly Teatree & River Bottlebrush, River Clubbrush, *Carex tereticaulis* & nardoo (grown by MEG from local seed) will be planted by the waterside, flanked by creekside plantings of *Poa labillardiere*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Pycnosurus* Drumsticks), *Craspedia* (Billy Button) *Mentha diemensis* & Calotis daisies.

Plants to attract butterflies were considered also. Melton is home to many different butterflies, & food plants were selected for specific butterfly species. Meadow Argus & Painted Lady also feed on common exotic weeds such as capeweed, plantain & thistles. Admirals feed on nettles & many skippers feed on sedges

Xenicas:	<i>Microlaena, Poa sieberiana, Themeda, Danthonia</i>
Common Brown:	<i>Microlaena, Poa, Themeda</i>
Painted Lady:	<i>Bracteantha, Chrysocephalus</i>
Meadow Argus:	<i>Convolvulus</i>
Caper White:	<i>Senna, Acacia</i>
Blues & Coppers:	<i>Cullen, Desmodium, Glycine, Acacia, Rhagodia, Indigofera</i>
Skippers:	<i>Dianella, Themeda</i>
Admiral	<i>Urtica</i>

Native vegetation

As well as plants selected from the appropriate EVC, local plants that are endangered, scarce or iconic were also selected.

Blue Box (*Eucalyptus bauriana* sp *thalassa*)

Restricted to the Werribee River catchment, so it is a locally iconic tree.

"A small number of 'Blue Box' thought to be Eucalyptus baueriana occur in the Werribee River Catchment although the next nearest population is near Bairnsdale in east Gippsland. Late in 2005 the Werribee River association submitted specimens to the National Herbarium of Victoria from an ancient tree which is thought to pre-date European settlement. Recently Neville Walsh the Senior Conservation Botanist has advised that the form of Eucalyptus baueriana which occurs in the Werribee Catchment is unique and although it still has to be properly described it has been listed as endangered under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act."

Alex Smart, President, WRIVA

Matted Flaxlily (*Dianella amoena*)

A nationally endangered & listed as 'Endangered' under the Commonwealth EPBP Act 1999. The Matted Flax Lily is a tufted, mat-forming lily, which grows to 50cm tall. It is under

Melton Environment Group

Arnolds Creek Biolink Project (Brookfield Village)

Funded by grants by: Melton Shire & Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority

threat from a variety of sources, including grazing, weed infestation, inappropriate fire regimes, and soil disturbance.

Buloke (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*)

A local woodland tree that is diminishing in numbers. Buloke woodlands were once scattered through this region but are now vulnerable. We hope to create a Buloke grove here.

Featherhead (*Ptilotis macrocephalus*)

A spectacular local grassland plant that is now restricted to a very few native grassland remnants. Although this is a grassland species we hope to establish these here for seed stock.

MELTON AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS 2009

Community Project of the Year: Arnolds Creek Biolink Project

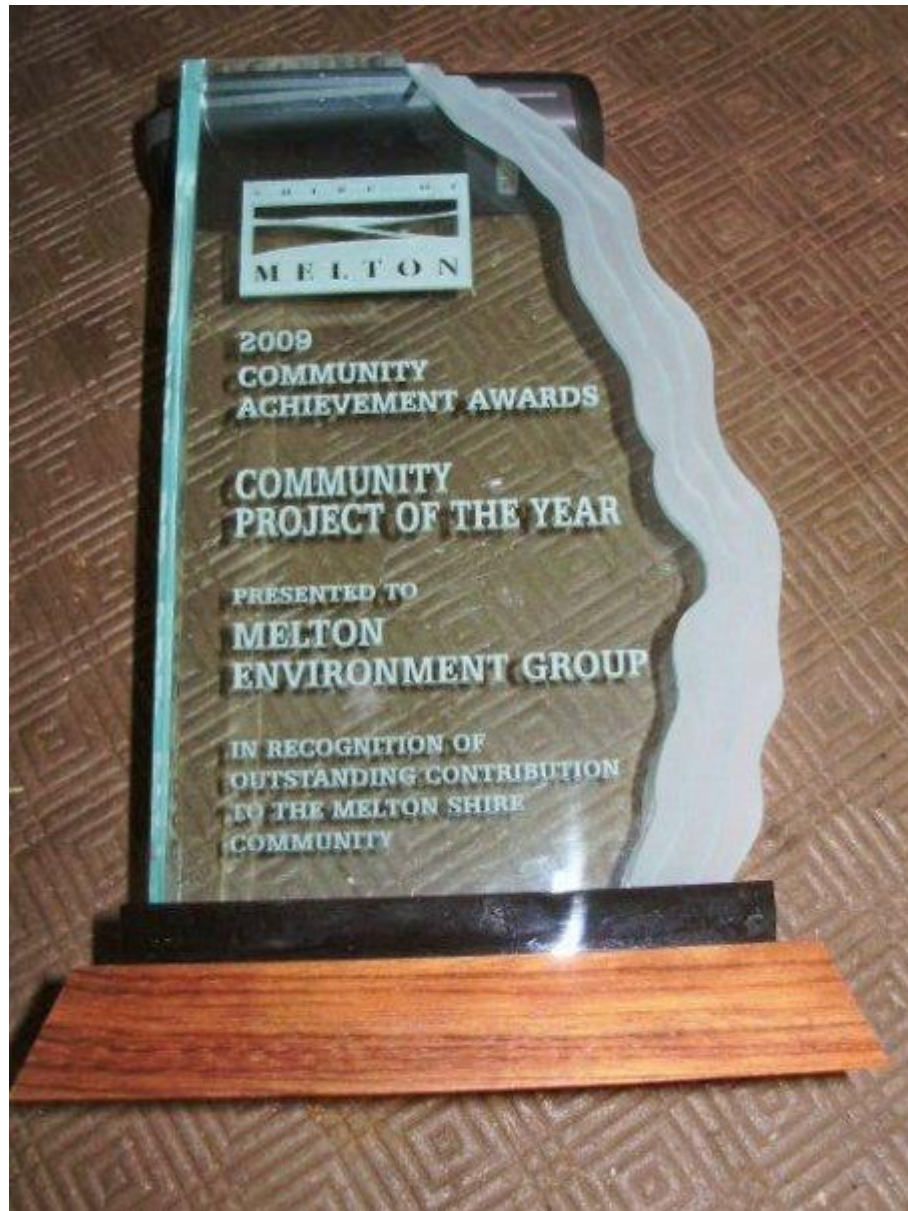
As part of the annual Australia Day celebrations, Melton Shire Council recognise local groups and individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the Melton Shire community through the Community Achievement Awards.

Nomination Categories Include:

- Achiever Award (open in 3 categories: under 25 years, 26-59 years & 60+ years of age)
- Community Group of the Year
- Community Project of the Year

COMMUNITY PROJECT OF THE YEAR: Melton Environment Group (Arnold's Creek)

“Arnold's Creek east and west branches form a biodiversity corridor through both rural and urban areas in Melton Shire. Melton Environment Group has undertaken considerable works in this wildlife corridor. Works include surveying flora and fauna, weeding and planting indigenous vegetation as well as educating the community about this historic site. Melton Environment Group has worked with a wide range of schools, churches and groups to improve understanding of this valuable corridor. members also act as a great resource to other local environment groups.”



MEG Weeding at Brookfield 2009

On Saturday 18th April Carmen & Peter, Mary, Michelle, Doug, Peter S, Pat & Daryl removed weeds at the planting site beside Brookfield Village on Arnolds Creek at Black Dog Drive, prior to planting here. Weeds are not yet prevalent here, mainly small boxthorns, galenia & serrated tussock. Our weeding activity has begun here just in time. Weeds have not yet taken hold in the treed area by the fence although the galenia proved more abundant than suspected, especially in the top corner around an old tree. Fortunately collateral damage among the similar looking Berry Saltbush was minimal



Carmen, Mary, Peter, Michelle & Doug weeding

Doug observed that the soil at the epicentre of the galenia infestation was loose, friable & seemed to have been disturbed; possibly the origin of the infestation. The roots of the galenia here were thick (up to 2cm) so we can expect some regrowth in this sector. Infestation away from this spot was lighter & easier to remove. Boxthorn & serrated tussock infestation was much lighter.

There is already a rich diversity of native ground cover here. Native saltbushes such as Berry Saltbush (*Atriplex*), Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena*) & Nodding Saltbush (*Einadia nutans*) grow prolifically on the ground, with one prostrate bush-pea (*Eutaxia microphylla*); as well as native grasses such as Wallaby Grass & Windmill Grass. Carmen found an Ant Lion (mistakenly identified at the time as a Caddisfly). This resembled a large damselfly but with long clubbed antennae. The naturally grown small trees protected by MEG with treeguards last year are flourishing. Newly found tree seedlings will also be guarded on subsequent visits. This site will form a link in the Arnolds Creek Biolink project, whereby a wildlife corridor will be created along Arnolds Creek over time.

Site preparation at Brookfield 2009

On Thursday 18th June Western Land Services prepared the Brookfield planting site prior to planting. The actual spraying was done by WLS's Peter Sell. Peter is also a member of MEG. The site to be planted was sprayed with Glyphosate, which is active for a short time only, as this is considered as more environmentally friendly, without adverse effects on wildlife. The site preparation was funded by a Melbourne Water & Catchment Management Authority grant. This will prevent weeds competing with our plants.



Peter Sell spraying Brookfield planting site

Planting at Brookfield June 2009

On Saturday 20th June Carmen & Peter, Doug, Daryl, Richard, Peter S, Karl Sass & 6 CVA volunteers (including 5 Korean students) led by Meg, planted 1000 plants at Brookfield. We planted trees & shrubs adjacent to those we planted last year & also planted riparian plants at the water's edge. The Red Gum, Blue Box, Teatree, Bottlebrush, Yam Daisy & Vittadinia were grown by MEG from local seed. Although it is winter the ground remains hard & dry, requiring energetic use of mattocks on the higher ground.

Riparian trees & shrubs (grown by MEG from locally collected seed) were planted at the creek's edge to stabilise the banks & prevent erosion:

Red Gum	Blue Box	River Bottlebrush	Woolly Teatree
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Several hundred tussock grasses, rushes & reeds were planted beside the creek to check silt from being washed into the creek. Wetland wildflowers were also planted:

Poa labillardiere	Lomandra longifolia	Muehlenbeckia florenta (lignum)
Mentha diemenica	Carex tereticaulis,	Schoenoplectus validus (rushes)
Craspedia glauca (billy buttons)		

The banks of the creek consist largely of bare bulldozed earth, resulting in silt being carried into the creek during rain. Dense planting of these riparian plants should stabilise the banks & reduce erosion of silt into the water. This in turn should help improve the water quality in Arnolds Creek, especially turbidity levels.



CVA volunteers planting at Brookfield

Dry ground plants were planted on a higher section of the back. Eucalypts were planted here, with an understorey of shrubs.

Eucalyptus microcarpa (Grey Box)	Eucalyptus melliodora (Yellow Box)
Golden Wattle	Gold-dust Wattle
Bursaria spinulosa	Dodoea cuneata
Vittadinia cuneata	Stipa elegantissima
Microseris lanceolata (Yam Daisy)	Hymenanthera dentate
	Senna artemisioides
	Clematis microphylla

This project is funded by both a Melton Shire Adopt A Park grant & a Melbourne Water CMA grant. This is part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink project, creating a link in a wildlife corridor along Arnolds Creek through Melton. Many plants remain to be planted here so 3 more planting days at Brookfield are scheduled. Thanks to Community Volunteers Australia & thanks also to Lifestyle Village Brookfield for providing access to the planting site. A pair of noisy kestrels kept us company as they hovered over the creek, possibly hunting for frogs.

Despite our view of this site as degraded & in dire need of restoration, one of the volunteers described it as “a beautiful place”; giving us a new perspective of this little woodland by the creek, hidden away in the middle of Melton. The rain that fell during the following week should give our plants a good start. The visiting volunteers were each given a Certificate of Appreciation by MEG.



Lunch at Brookfield

Planting at Brookfield July 2009

On Saturday 18th July Doug, Mary & Daryl of MEG were joined by Karl Sass & Brookfield resident John Dunne, & 6 CVA volunteers.

Together we planted over 1000 plants:

Yellow Box	Grey Box	Dodonea	Hymenanthera
Bursaria	Indigofera	Acacia acinacea	Acacia mearnsii
Acacia pycnantha	Senna	Nardoo	Schoenoplectus
Carex tereticaulis	Calotis daisies	Crassula	Themeda
Poa labillardiere	Poa sieberiani	Microlaena	Eutaxia diffusa
Dianella longifolia	Dianella amoena	Stipa scabra	

Dianella longifolia (Pale Flaxlily) is a local plant still found in some local native grassland & grassy woodland remnants but *Dianella amoena* (Matted Flaxlily) is a rare & endangered Victorian species now found in only a few places. *Dianella amoena* is listed under the Commonwealth EPBP Act 1999 as 'Endangered' so it would be good to have it established here. Several of the Yellow Box trees planted were grown by MEG from seed collected from this site.

Poa labillardiere, *Calotis daisies*, nardoo & stonecrop were planted beside the creek while *Schoenoplectus* (Club Rush) & *Carex tereticaulis* were planted in the water. *Poa sieberiani*, *Themeda* (Kangaroo Grass) & *Microlaena* (Weeping Grass) were planted

on drier ground. The remaining trees, shrubs & *Stipa scabra* (speargrass) were planted on dry land beside those planted here in 2008. We continued our policy of not using stakes or guards when planting within the town to avoid vandalism.



Planting site beside Arnolds creek at Brookfield Village



MEG, Brookfield residents & CVA volunteers planting beside Arnolds Creek at Brookfield village

Wildflower planting at Brookfield Friday 7th August



Michelle & CVA volunteers at Brookfield

On Friday 7th August Carmen, Peter, Michelle & Daryl of MEG were joined by a team of 6 volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia who assisted in planting 400 wildflowers beside Arnolds Creek at Brookfield. We planted a variety of indigenous wildflowers on the higher ground near the Grey Box remnant woodland adjacent to Brookfield Lifestyle Retirement Village. The morning was cold & windy & the ground was hard. The soil was also quite dry & hydrophobic, making planting slow & difficult. Reluctance to use our auger so close to the residents' homes dictated the use of mattocks to dig the holes. A heavy wind-driven rainstorm temporarily forced us into vehicles to escape the rain mid morning. Soon after lunch the swift onset of another storm caused us to abandon further planting. The heavy shower gave our plants a good watering. A sandwich platter was provided at lunchtime & the volunteers were each given a certificate of appreciation from MEG.

Plants included:

Buloke
 Clustered Everlasting
 Sticky Everlasting
 Lemon Beauty-heads
 Wahlenbergia
 Eutaxia diffusa
 Cullen tenax
 Eutaxia microphylla
 Senna
 Rhodanthe anthemeoides
 Golden Wattle
 Dianella longifolia
 Dianella amoena

Dianella revoluta
 Yam Daisy
 Ptilotis macrocephala
 Vittadinia Daisy
 Redleg Grass
 Kangaroo Grass
 Silky Bluegrass
 Hop Bush
 Hymenanthera dentata
 Running Postman
 Dichondra repens
 Clematis microphylla

Matted Flaxlily (*Dianella amoena*) is listed as 'Endangered' under the Commonwealth EPBP Act 1999. This tufted, mat-forming lily grows to 50cm tall. The Buloke (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) is a local woodland tree that is diminishing in numbers. Buloke woodlands were once scattered through this region but are now vulnerable. Hopefully a Buloke grove will be established here. The Featherhead (*Ptilotis macrocephalus*) is a spectacular local grassland plant that is now restricted to a very few native grassland remnants. The Yam Daisy or Myrniong (*Microseris lanceolata*) is a yellow daisy that was a major food plant for the local Aboriginal people. It was once abundant on the western plains but has now virtually disappeared. These massed native wildflowers should present a magnificent floral display this coming spring. The Indigofera are already starting to show pink flower buds!



More wildflower planting at Brookfield 12th August

On Wednesday 12th August MEG members Carmen & Daryl were joined by 9 CVA volunteers, (led by team leader Deb), once again planting beside Arnolds Creek at Black Melton Environment Group Arnolds Creek Biolink Project (Brookfield Village)
 Funded by grants by: Melton Shire & Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority

Dog Drive. We were paid a visit by a photographer from Melton Leader who took several photos of the volunteers. Together we planted 450 plants, mainly wildflowers but also a selection of small shrubs. This barren previously weed infested site should be a mass of wildflowers this coming spring & in a few years should take on a more natural bushland appearance. While digging, we accidentally disturbed several nests of Golden-flumed Sugar Ant (*Camponotus suffusus*). We also found at least two *Myrmecia* species, fortunately sluggish & docile due to the colder weather. One appears to be *Myrmecia nigriceps* & there is also a smaller Jumping Ant present.

Twelve millimetres of rain the previous day turned the site into a sticky quagmire that fortunately dried out during the morning. Even after this rain the ground was still dry & hard several centimetres below the surface. Hopefully this rain should ensure the plants have a good start. A sausage sizzle lunch was supplied by Melton Lions Club.

Again, many volunteers were international students from Korea. Restoring our natural environment has become an international event, involving people from far across the sea. This reflects that although our efforts are on a local level, environmental issues affect us all on a global scale. We are grateful that these young people choose to spend some of their spare time helping restore our local creek. Hopefully long after these students have returned home their visit to Melton (muddy as it was) will remain a positive feature of their time in Australia. We learned that you say "*kimchi*" when being photographed rather than "*cheese*" as is the case locally!



CVA planting at Brookfield



BBQ supplied by Melton Lions

Plants included:

Ruby Saltbush
 Wahlenbergia
 Eutaxia diffusa
 Eutaxia microphylla
 Cullen tenax
 Golden Wattle
 Black Wattle
 Gold-dust Wattle
 Dianella amoena
 Silky Bluegrass
 Redleg Grass
 Hymenanthera dentata
 Running Postman
 Dichondra repens
 Bursaria spinosa
 Clematis microphylla
 Sticky Everlasting
 Austral Pelargonium
 Sweet Tobacco

Conservation Volunteers Australia expressed gratitude for forwarding to them photos of the volunteers planting at Brookfield:

“Leesa Ridley has forwarded on the fantastic photos taken. I thought I would drop you a short email to thank you for this. It is greatly appreciated by our organization.”

Kind regards

Bryan K. Williams

Melton Environment Group

Arnolds Creek Biolink Project (Brookfield Village)

Funded by grants by: Melton Shire & Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority

Regional Manager,
Melbourne CV Office

Many thanks to Conservation Volunteers of Australia & Melton Lions Club for making this planting event a success.

Melton Leader newspaper 18th August 2009



Korean student Ji Misun at the tree-planting. N08MT208

Tree planting for creek health

IT is a never-ending and often thankless task, but the revitalisation of Melton's waterways is a passion for Daryl Akers and the Melton Environment Group.

Last week Mr Akers and a group of volunteers continued planting native wildlife trees and plants at the creek alongside Brookfield Village in Melton South.

"We always plant around winter time because the ground is softer," Mr Akers said.

"We've spent four days down near Brookfield Village in the last couple of weeks revitalising what is essentially a waste land into an area of native plants."

Mr Akers said Melton's waterways were the lungs of the town.

"Especially with so much new development, the areas around the creeks are really the only place for native animals and trees," he said.

HAVE YOU BEEN

Planting at Arnolds Creek at Brookfield

More planting at Brookfield 30th August 2009

On Sunday 30th August Peter Sell, Peter Marks, Doug Godsil & Daryl Akers returned to Brookfield to continue planting. We were later joined by Aaron & Allan Benson. We planted mainly shrubs near where we planted extensive wildflowers, beside the remnant Grey Box

Melton Environment Group

Arnolds Creek Biolink Project (Brookfield Village)

Funded by grants by: Melton Shire & Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority

trees beside the village. We planted 250 plants before lunch. Despite the recent rains, the soil was still dry & powdery, requiring heavy watering. Again, the Bensons brought their trailer & water tank when our tank ran out of water. Most of the wildflowers we planted earlier are thriving, despite a few losses. The Sticky Everlasting & Clustered Everlasting Daisies are about to bloom while the Indigoferas already have pink flowers. As the first day of spring (1st September) is Wattle Day, it is appropriate that wattles feature prominently on our planting list.

We planted:

Dodonea (Hop Bush)
Gold-dust Wattle
Golden Wattle
Hedge Wattle
Black Wattle
Lightwood Wattle
Hymenanthera
Bursaria Dichondra
Eutaxia affinis (Egg & Bacon Bush)
Austral Pelargonium
Cullen tenax



Melton Watery Wonders Tour

On Saturday 5th September 2009 Sasha Roos & Richard Akers of Waterwatch hosted the "The Melton Watery Wonders Bus Tour" accompanied by Linda Bradburn of Melton Shire. MEG members Carmen & Peter Marks, & Mary Magri participated in the tour. The visitors were

Melton Environment Group

Arnolds Creek Biolink Project (Brookfield Village)

Funded by grants by: Melton Shire & Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority

shown where MEG has been re-vegetating both the Arnolds Creek creekside & the adjacent woodland remnant, as part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink project. Hopefully some of the visitors will be inspired to participate in local environmental activity.

Sasha Roos of Waterwatch comments:

"The Melton Watery Wonders Bus Tour welcomed members of the community to join Waterwatch on a day of discovering their local waterways. The day featured guest speakers representing three environmental groups within the area, and included an informative presentation from Melton Environment Group which concluded with a stroll down to Arnold's Creek. The event was very well received by all 33 members of the community, which more than half have only lived within Melton Shire Council within the last 1-3 years."

Some of the quotes from the day were:

"The presentation really opened our eyes...the work was inspiring."

"I learnt about the number of environment groups around Melton- surprised there are so many!"

"...motivated to become involved to know what's happening in the local community"

"I learnt that how important it is for us to look after the environment"



Melton Christian College planting at Brookfield 11th November 2009

On Wednesday 11th November about 100 students from Melton Christian College assisted MEG in planting the last of the wildflowers & grasses at Brookfield. There were 3 planting groups from years 7, 9 & 11. The students walked to & from the school. We were assisted by the presence of a water tank supplied by the Melton Shire that ensured the plants were well watered when planted. Lyn Holdsworth (Friends of Toolern Creek) & Trevor (Western Land Services) helped direct the planting.

As the soil here is highly hydrophobic, we experimented by drilling the holes the previous day & filling them with water. This also expedited planting the following day. The students were energetic & enthusiastic & it was pleasantly surprising how quickly all plants were planted by the student, when the holes had already been dug. The students planted 436 plants but we could easily have planted twice this amount if more holes had been dug beforehand. A lesson for the future.

Many thanks to Ron Fink for organizing the students & to the other teachers from MCC. Thanks also to Lyn Holdsworth (FOTC), Melton Shire & Trevor (WLS).

We planted a large variety of wildflowers, grasses & a few shrubs:

Gold-dust wattle

Senna artemesioides

Pimelia glauca

Senecio macrocarpus

Cassinia arcuata

Pelargonium rodneyanum

Podolepis jaceoides

Kangaroo Grass

Minnie Daisy

(Minuria leptophylla)

New Holland Daisy

(Vittadininia cuneata)

Basalt Daisy

(Brachyscome basaltica)

Bluebell

(Wahlenbergia communis)

Bulbine Lily

Chamomile Sunray

Speargrass

(Stipa glabra, Stipa elegantissima & Stipa bigeniculata)

Everlasting Daisy

(Chrysocephalum apiculatum & C. semipapposum)



Melton Christian College year 9 students planting at Brookfield

Future environmental activities at Brookfield

In 2010, as well as revegetation activities, MEG would like to place nest boxes along Arnolds Creek to supplement the supply of tree nest hollows for wildlife. This is hoped to be a partnership activity with Melton Mens Shed, Brookfield Kindergarten, Waterwatch & Brookfield Village residents. Hopefully, the Mens Shed will construct the nest boxes from materials supplied by MEG & the nest boxes will be individually painted by Brookfield Kindergarten kids. The Brookfield residents who presently monitor the water quality here with Waterwatch may also conduct a monitoring role for the nest boxes.

ARNOLDS CREEK BIOLINK PROJECT BROOKFIELD SITE: 2010

Mulching at Brookfield 31st January 2010

On Sunday 31st January MEG spread about 40 metres of mulch at Arnolds Creek beside Brookfield Retirement Village at Black Dog Drive. MEG corporate members Western Land Services supplied a tip truck & a bobcat to help move the 8 large piles of mulch. Malcolm, Lisa, Doug, Peter Sell, Carmen, Michelle, Daryl, Stephen Fernandez, Alex Esquirez, Daniel Hill & Tony from WLS all braved the hot blustery conditions. Mulch & dust swirled all around as we shovelled & forked. Clouds of mulch billowed about as the bobcat loaded the mulch onto the truck which in turn dumped the mulch onto the plants. It was necessary to wear

glasses & protective eyewear to guard against the flying mulch. We still have some mulch to move but the bulk of the work has been done.

Many thanks to the volunteers who spent their weekend time doing this uncomfortable task on such an unpleasant blustery day. Many thanks also to Peter Sell for organising this event with Western Land Services & for Peter, Stephen & Tony whose expertise in environmental work of this type made the operation move smoothly. Many thanks also to Western Land Services for supplying the truck & bobcat. With their help we were able to do in a morning what would have taken us many weekends to accomplish using just wheelbarrows, buckets & forks.



Peter Sell & Carmen spreading mulch



MEG corporate members Western Land Services supplied a tip truck & a bobcat

Nest Boxes built by Melton Mens Shed

22nd Tuesday June 2010

On Tuesday 22nd Doug Godsil & Daryl Akers of MEG visited Melton Mens Shed where Darren Cunningham & Gil Ellis presented us with 8 wildlife nest boxes built by the Mens Shed. The Mens Shed has already built many wildlife boxes for Wildlife Victoria for bushfire affected areas. Doug had suggested that we ask the Mens Shed to build nestboxes for MEG to house local wildlife. Wildlife Victoria has endorsed our use of their nest box design for use in Melton. Another 7 nest boxes were picked up a couple of weeks later.

The completed nest boxes will be painted by local kindergarten & school children. This will hopefully give the children an awareness of their local natural environment & give them a sense of helping protect their own local wildlife. This will give them a distinctive appearance & it is not expected that the wildlife will be deterred by the children's' painting. Darren Cunningham & Gil Ellis with nest boxes

The boxes were built with holes of 2 different diameters, to suit different wildlife. These should suit a variety of local wildlife including: parrots, corellas, galahs, ducks, kookaburras, owls, possums etc. Later we may look at having bat boxes built also. Hopefully we should have other joint partnership projects in the future.

These boxes were built totally from recycled timber, making this project an innovative example of practical recycling, in keeping with Melton's recent winning of Victorian Sustainable City of the Year award; as well as providing homes for local wildlife along Arnolds Creek. Many thanks to Melton Mens shed.



Darren Cunningham & Gil Ellis with nest boxes for Arnolds Creek

April 2011 Heritage issues at Brookfield resolved

MEG can once again resume environmental activities at Brookfield as the heritage issues here have been resolved. A site visit by a Wurundjeri representative in April determined that our site at Brookfield is of little archaeological significance. It was extensively worked over & covered by landfill during initial development activities when the Village was originally constructed. Also, as our site is in a flood zone (as recent experience here confirms, on numerous occasions) this site would not have been a likely living site. The artefacts that were found near here were all on higher ground. As our Melbourne Water grant was dependent upon having these heritage issues resolved, we can now properly plan environmental activities once again. Weed control is now the first priority.

Spraying at Brookfield 16th April

On Saturday 16th April Peter Sell & Branden Ball of Western Land Services (WLS) sprayed the weeds on our planting site that have grown rampant during our absence over the last year. Peter is a MEG member & WLS is a corporate member of MEG. The knee-high weeds were a gratifying blue colour after they had finished. This spraying operation has been funded by our Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program grant.



Peter & Branden spraying weeds at Brookfield

MEG has funding from Melbourne Water to revegetate the next stretch of creek side beside Arnolds Creek, immediately downstream (south) of the site we have been working on since 2008.

Return to Brookfield



Peter & Doug planting at Brookfield

On Saturday 30th April MEG recommenced environmental planting at Brookfield. Peter Sell had prepared the site by spraying weeds a couple of weeks earlier. The previously rampant knee-high weeds are now dried & withered. Doug Godsil, Peter Sell & Daryl Akers planted about 160 plants. These included Blue Box, Grey Box, Red Gum, Golden Wattle, Gold-dust Wattle, Blackwood, Varnish Wattle, Melicytis (aka Hymenthera), Hopbush, & Bursaria. Soaking rains a day later should help their survival.



Thomas Sell admiring MEG's new improved trailer

Doug & Peter unloading our new trailer This is the first time our refurbished trailer has been used. The trailer now has the capacity to carry many more plants & equipment, after having been rebuilt & improved under Peter Sell's direction. The trailer can now carry 500 plants on top, with more inside! Peter has designed & directed numerous enhancements to the trailer, while his engineering friend Alex Esqueria put Peter's ideas into effect. Both

plants, site preparation & trailer refurbishment were sponsored by a Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program grant.

Planting at Brookfield

On Saturday 28th May Carmen, Doug & Daryl returned to Arnolds Creek near Brookfield Lifestyle Retirement Village in Black Dog Drive. This is part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project. The 160 plants we planted here in April are doing well. We expect to have CVA volunteers for the next 3 planting days so we expect to plant a lot more here. Most of the plants were funded by a Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program grant but about 20 were supplied by MEG & the Kangaroo Apple by Carmen.



Carmen & Peter planting at Brookfield

Despite the cold wintry conditions we planted 80 understory plants:

Bursaria Melicytus	Gold-dust Wattle	Golden Wattle
Drooping Sheoke	Kangaroo Apple	Varnish Wattle

Planting at Brookfield

Doug drilling holes with CVA volunteer On Saturday 25th June Doug, Carmen & Daryl of MEG were joined by a team of 8 from Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) at Arnolds Creek beside Lifestyle Brookfield Retirement Village. This is part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project & is funded by a Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program grant. The day was warm & sunny, & the soil was soft & moist. In previous years the soil has been dry & rock-hard, too hard even for the auger; but the soil is now soft & friable. Previously, plant losses here were high due to drought but we confidently expect much higher rates of survival as we are no longer planting in dry soil. MEG supplied our usual sandwich platter, fruit, with hot & cold drinks. Each volunteer was presented with a MEG Certificate of Appreciation. Under CVA team leader Martin's direction we planted 600 understory plants. Many thanks to Conservation Volunteers Australia!

Plants included:

Varnish Wattle

Gold-dust Wattle

Melicytus (Hymenanthera)

Bursaria

Hop Bush

Senna

Bush Pea (Eutaxia)

Coburns Primary School: Presentation of painted nestboxes Friday 23rd July 2.30 pm

On Friday 23rd July at 2.30 pm Coburns Primary School will present the nestboxes painted by the students to MEG. These nestboxes were built for MEG by Melton Mens Shed.

National Treeplanting Day



On Sunday 31st MEG planted beside Arnolds Creek near Brookfield Lifestyle Retirement Village.

This project is part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project & is funded by a Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program grant. We planted over 250 shrubs. These will form an understory beneath the Red Gums & Grey, Blue & Yellow Box trees we have already planted on the site.

These included:

Bush Pea (Eutaxia)

Senna

Bursaria

Hop Bush (Dodonea)

ARNOLDS CREEK BIOLINK PROJECT: NESTBOX PROJECT

In 2008 Melbourne Water conducted extensive works cleaning up Arnolds Creek in the vicinity of Brookfield Village. Weeds, woody weeds, debris and accumulated silt were removed to enable water to flow freely once again. This picturesque site, with its remnant large Red Gums, Grey and Yellow Box and small Grey Box woodland remnant beside the newly created wetland, is a prime site for revegetation. It will become both an attractive park and wildlife refuge.

Birds at Brookfield

To date 44 bird species have been observed at Brookfield. We hope to increase the numbers & diversity of bird species here by enhancing the native vegetation here. Some of these already nest here, including: Black Duck, Wood Duck, Welcome Swallow, Magpies, Little Raven, White-plumed Honeyeater & Red Wattlebird. We also hope to encourage the nesting of other species of birdlife, as well as other wildlife.

Planning for Wildlife at Brookfield

There are a number of native wildlife species that we can realistically hope to attract here. Wildlife have a number of requirements in order for them to survive. Habitat requirements vary between species but the basic requirements are common to all living creatures, including humans (ie food, water, shelter, place to raise young). We must address these to attract wildlife.

- Planting native wildflowers, shrubs and trees will provide the foliage, nectar, pollen, berries, seeds, and insects that wildlife require to survive.
- Wildlife needs clean water for many purposes, including drinking, bathing and reproduction. The wetland provided by Arnolds Creek will provide this
- Wildlife needs shelter from people, predators and weather, such as native vegetation, tree hollows, shrubs, thickets or even dead trees.
- Wildlife needs a sheltered place to raise their offspring. Many places for cover can double as locations where wildlife can raise young, from wildflowers and bushes where many butterflies and moths lay their eggs, or tree hollows where bats, possums and birds can roost or nest.

Bushy undergrowth should encourage Blue Wrens, Red-browed Finches and Yellow-tailed Thornbills (common at lower Arnolds Creek). Wattles, peas and sennas (and their seeds) may even encourage Bronzewing Pigeons (a pair of these lived at Little Blind Creek in Kurunjang during the drought and one was seen at Brookfield early in 2009). Aquatic and emergent aquatics should provide cover for native fish, frogs and invertebrates, which may in turn attract herons, egrets and kingfishers (seen at lower Arnolds Creek and other local creeks in warmer months). Other birds found at lower Arnolds Creek (and other local creeks) such as Grey Fantails, Little Thornbills, Brown Goshawks, pardalotes, scrubwrens, and cuckoos etc, may return with the planting of more native vegetation, especially prickly understory plants.

Possums are absent from this site at present. Nest hollows for native wildlife will be enhanced by placement of appropriate nest boxes. There are many ancient gum trees here

with natural hollows but the provision of nest boxes should improve nesting opportunities for birds such as ducks, owls, parrots, galahs, corellas and possums. Large boxes may even be suitable for cockatoos and kookaburras, as these require very large hollows.

Nestbox Project: Melton Mens Shed

In 2010 MEG member Doug Godsil suggested that we ask the Mens Shed to build nest boxes for MEG to house local wildlife. The Mens Shed had already built many wildlife boxes for Wildlife Victoria for bushfire affected areas. The Mens Shed was happy to support this project.

On Tuesday 22nd June 2010 Doug Godsil and Daryl Akers of MEG visited Melton Mens Shed where Darren Cunningham and Gil Ellis presented us with eight wildlife nest boxes built by the Mens Shed. Wildlife Victoria has endorsed our use of their nest box design for use in Melton. Another seven nest boxes were picked up a couple of weeks later. The boxes were built with holes of 2 different diameters, to suit different wildlife. These should suit a variety of local wildlife including: parrots, corellas, galahs, ducks, kookaburras, owls, possums etc. Hopefully we should have other joint partnership projects in the future. These boxes were built totally from recycled timber, making this project an innovative example of practical recycling, in keeping with Melton's recent winning of Victorian Sustainable City of the Year award; as well as providing homes for local wildlife along Arnolds Creek. Many thanks to Melton Mens shed.

Nestbox painting: Coburns Primary School

Painted nest boxes on display in Coburns Primary School reception area



A number of the completed nest boxes have been painted by students of Coburns Primary School. This will hopefully give the children an awareness of their local natural environment and give them a sense of helping protect their own local wildlife. This will give them a distinctive appearance and it is not expected that the wildlife will be deterred by the

children's' painting.

The beautifully painted nest boxes were for some time on a display cabinet in the school's reception area, among the trophies, plaques and presentation plaques. Two extra boxes were given to the school for painting and placement within the school grounds. Hopefully the children will see birds nesting in their own distinctively painted nest boxes, in their own school ground.

The nest boxes are beautifully painted and the students have displayed both imagination and artistic talent. They have been painted in environmental themes including brightly coloured flowers, birds, dragonflies and other insects, possums, lizards and other wildlife etc. The pictures were outlined with black highlighter to make them stand out better. The distinctively painted boxes high in their respective trees will remain brilliantly coloured tributes to the students who painted them so imaginatively. They are not only homes for wildlife but works of art!

On Friday 23rd July Coburns Primary School students presented the nest boxes painted by the students to MEG, at their afternoon assembly. This occasion was reported in the local press. The students were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for their artistic efforts. This project is an excellent example of a community environmental group working in partnership with other community groups, schools, local authorities and local business to improve our local waterways.

When it was explained to the students that the boxes would be placed five metres from the ground, one of the boys asked why we did not paint the bottoms also. We hadn't thought of this! So the boxes were left at the school for this omission to be rectified. A good example of lateral thinking and a good example to us why we should listen to kids' ideas!
Melton Moorabool Leader article July 2011



Coburns Primary teacher Mel Spencer and students

Melton Shire World Environment Day Grants of \$1000 in 2011 for Nestbox Project

On Friday 3rd June Melton Shire awarded Grants for World Environment Day 2011 to 5 local community environmental groups. MEG will use this grant to place the nest boxes in trees beside Arnolds Creek. Melton Environment Group corporate member Western Land Services have agreed to place the nest boxes local trees as they need to be placed at least 5 metres from the ground, and in accordance with OH&S practices. This will be done by a 2 man crew with ladder training, ladder will be secured by a person at bottom, and tied to tree at the top.

The nest boxes will be placed in local trees by Melton Environment Group corporate member Western Land Services, funded by the grant from Melton Shire.

This project is an excellent example of a community environmental group working in partnership with other community groups, schools, local authorities and local business to improve our local waterways. These will not only be habitat for wildlife but examples of community art.

Where else will you see wildlife nesting inside works of art?

DID YOU KNOW | Small Area Labour Markets presents estimates of unemployment rates for about 1400 regions across Australia.

Jobless figures improving

Melton Moorabool Leader July 26th 2011

Melton Shire has seen a steady drop in unemployment over the past 12 months

Jobs | Andrew Jefferson

UNEMPLOYMENT in Melton Shire has fallen for the fourth quarter in a row.

The shire's official unemployment rate for March 2011 was 6.7 per cent — a 0.05 per cent drop on the December 2010 quarter figure of 6.75 per cent.

But the shire's March 2011 jobless rate is still 1.5 per cent higher than the state average of 5.2 per cent and 1.8 per cent higher than the Melbourne average of 4.9 per cent.

Melton Shire's jobless rate has decreased 1.4 per cent for the past year. It reached a high of 8.1 per cent in March 2010.

Unemployment in Melton Shire was 7.55 per cent in June 2010, and 7.2 per cent in September 2010.

There were 3325 people officially registered as unemployed in Melton Shire in the March 2011 quarter.

For the December 2010 to March 2011 quarter Melton East saw its unemployment rate fall from 6.7 per cent to 5.5 per cent (down 0.1 per cent), while the balance of Melton remained steady at 7.8 per cent.

For the 12 months from March 2010 to March 2011 Melton East's unemployment rate fell from 6.9 per cent to 5.6 per cent (down 1.3 per cent), while the balance of Melton fell from 8.8 to 7.8 per cent (down 1.0 per cent).

Melton East now has a labour force of 25,300 people and the balance of the shire has 20,470.

Online
Powered by wherealive.com.au

Is it hard to find work in Melton Shire? Tell us at meltonleader.com.au

Nesting boxes get a flash makeover

WILDLIFE along Arnolds Creek can nest in style following a splash of colour added to their new boxes.

Melton's Men's Shed members, who had already built many wildlife boxes for Wildlife Victoria in bushfire-affected areas, last year built 15 nesting boxes for the Melton Environment Group to house local wildlife.

MEG president Daryl Akers said the boxes, built from recycled timber, would suit parrots, cockatoos, galahs, ducks, kookaburras, owls and possums.

Several of the completed boxes were painted by students at Coburn Primary School and returned to MEG last Friday.

Mr Akers said the children would gain a sense of helping to protect their wildlife.



Students Ethan and Jake, both 11, with Melton Environment Group president Daryl Akers.

Picture: KRISTIE GILL NEWATON

Carers speak out

STATISTICS show carers suffer more depression and anxiety than the general population, and 40 per cent have chronic health problems. In a special multimedia report, journalist Andy Drowitt speaks to some of the people who care for family members, and they explain what a national disability insurance scheme would mean to them. Go to lesdernews.com.au

AFL podcast

JOIN Leader's Rick Edwards and Andre Awadalla each Friday as they tackle the big AFL issues and preview each round on Tips and Gratuities. Go to meltonleader.com.au

Completed nesboxes painted by Coburns Primary School students

Melton Leader January 24 2012



Daryl Akers at Arnolds Creek with nesting boxes, which offer a wildlife haven.

Picture: MITCH GEAR/NEWS1200

Caring response to call of the wild

SEVERAL new pieces of real estate have come on to the market in Arnolds Creek.

Nine nesting boxes painted by students from Coburn Primary School were placed in trees beside the creek last Tuesday.

Built for the Melton Environment Group by the Melton Men's Shed, the boxes will provide a haven for an array of wildlife.

Group president Daryl Akers

said parrots, corellas, galahs, ducks, kookaburras, owls and possums would all benefit from the boxes.

He said the boxes had been beautifully painted by students, who displayed both imagination and artistic talent in their designs.

"They have been painted in environmental themes including brightly coloured flowers, birds, dragonflies and other insects,

possums, lizards and other wildlife," he said.

He said the nesting boxes had been placed in trees at least 4m from the ground.

"The distinctively painted boxes will remain brilliantly coloured tributes to the students who painted them so imaginatively," Mr Akers said. "These will not only be homes for wildlife but examples of community art."

News

Boxes for wildlife



Melton Environment Group and Melton Men's Shed are to create nest boxes as homes for local wildlife.

President of MEG Daryl Akers said the Men's Shed has already been making a large number of possum boxes for Wildlife Victoria.

"These were placed in areas devastated by last year's Black Saturday bushfires, to replace natural nest hollows destroyed by fire," he said.

Now the group has agreed to make a number of nest boxes for the Melton Environment Group, as homes for local wildlife. The nest boxes will then be placed in local trees in a joint venture between MEG and corporate member Western Land Services.

"The boxes need to be placed at least 5 metres from the ground and Wildlife Victoria has kindly endorsed our use of their nest box design," Mr Akers said.

Gil Ellis and Darren Cunningham of the Melton Men's Shed suggest that

instead of purchasing plywood, they could use sheets reconstituted from pine off cuts from other projects, providing a durable building material with a distinctive parquet appearance.

Mr Cunningham said the nest boxes made from recycled timber would be an innovative example of practical recycling as well as providing homes for local wildlife.

"The completed nest boxes will then be painted by local kindergarten children. This should give the children an awareness of their local natural environment wildlife and give them a sense of helping protect their local wildlife. It is not expected that the wildlife will be deterred by the children's painting," Mr Cunningham said.

Mr Akers said this project is an excellent example of a community environmental group working in partnership with other community groups, local authorities and local business to improve our local waterways.

Scouts honour

By Breeanna Redden

Scout veteran Dougal Mayor was more than prepared to take on his new role as Scouts Regional Commissioner last month thanks to his twenty-three year previous experience in the scouting movement.

Mr Mayor has his work cut out for him overseeing eight shires including Moora-brook, and 2000 scouts, and believes the effort is worth the reward.

"Scouting continues to provide programs that offer self-confidence and self-reliance to people of all ages," he said.

The Bacchus Marsh branch has just over 60 members ranging from Joeys (6 to 8yo) to Rovers (young adults aged 18 to 25).

Lisa Camilleri is the newly appointed group leader of the 1st Bacchus Marsh scout troop and was humbled when asked to take up Dougal's previous post after joining the group as an as-

sistant leader just eighteen months before.

"My son had joined scouts 12 months earlier and being an ex-Rover myself, felt I had some time to volunteer and support young adults as I had once been supported," she said.

"The purpose of Scouting is to encourage the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development of young people.

"My role as group leader is to ensure the section leaders are able to deliver the best possible programme and Scouting experience to the children," Ms Camilleri said.

Currently the Bacchus Marsh troop is organising fundraising events to help send cub scouts to the popular Cuboree Camp in Gilwell Park during the September school holidays.

The five day event is held every three years and is one of the most iconic events on the Scout's calendar.



NEW ROLE - Dougal Mayor has been involved in the Scouting movement for 23 years and will now take up a new role of Regional Commissioner.



Babies born in Moora



Melton couple Darren welcomed Aiden Mitchell family on Monday 2010 at 3:44pm brother for Ben Jordan, Aiden 3480grams (7lbs)



Kurrungang couple welcomed baby Joshua at 7:15pm Thursday 15 A Weighing 4040g (15oz) Callum brother for Loralee



Renee and M Sunbury are proud parents of Ma who was born on Thursday 15 weighing 4167g (3oz).

Nest boxes placed in trees beside Arnolds Creek by Western Land Services, on behalf of Melton Environment Group.

On Tuesday 17th January nine nest boxes painted by students from Coburns Primary School were placed in trees beside Arnolds Creek by environmental contractors Western Land Services, on behalf of Melton Environment Group.

The nest boxes had been built for Melton Environment Group by Melton Mens Shed. The boxes were built with holes of 2 different diameters, to suit different wildlife. These should suit a variety of local wildlife including: parrots, corellas, galahs, ducks, kookaburras, owls and possums etc. These boxes were built from recycled timber, making this project an innovative example of practical recycling; as well as providing homes for local wildlife along Arnolds Creek.

The nest boxes are beautifully painted and the students have displayed both imagination and artistic talent, under the guidance of teacher Mel Spencer. They have been painted in environmental themes including brightly coloured flowers, birds, dragonflies and other insects, possums, lizards and other wildlife etc.

One of the students asked where the nestboxes were going. When told that they would be placed at least 4-5 metres from the ground in trees he then asked: 'Why didn't we paint the bottoms?'

The nest boxes were returned to the students to complete the job, as they suggested. A good example of why we should listen to young people!

The nest boxes were placed in trees, at least 4 metres from the ground, by Melton Environment Group corporate member Western Land Services, funded by a World Environment Day grant from Melton Shire in 2011. The boxes were placed in the trees in accordance with guidelines from LaTrobe University, facing east so they will enjoy the morning sun but protected from the harsh afternoon sun by the tree trunk.

Melton Environment Group is grateful to Melton Shire for providing environmental grants of \$1000 each to five local community environmental volunteer groups.

This project is an excellent example of a community environmental group working in partnership with other community groups, schools, local authorities and local business to improve the natural environment of our local waterways.

The distinctively painted boxes will remain brilliantly coloured tributes to the students who painted them so imaginatively. They are not only homes for wildlife but works of art! These will not only be habitat for wildlife but examples of community art. Where else will you see wildlife nesting inside works of art?



Planting at Brookfield

On Saturday 27th August Flo, Carmen, Doug, Daryl & Peter Sell of MEG assisted by volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia & several local volunteers planted about 800 native shrubs beside Arnolds Creek at Brookfield as part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project funded by a Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program grant.

Many of the plants were grown by women from the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre at the Women's Prison in Deer Park, under the direction of teacher Judy Allen.

Rare basalt Grevilleas return to Melton

Western Plains Nursery recently supplied MEG with 2 rare grevilleas for planting locally. These are *Grevillea latrobei* & *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* 'Somerton'. Only a few plants of either of these varieties survive in the wild. *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* 'Somerton' is apparently found only on one site at Somerton while the *Grevillea latrobei* is from Plenty Gorge. These are suckering grevilleas that grow on basalt soils. Discussions on these grevilleas are on: <http://anpsa.org.au/grevSG/grev85.pdf> & <http://anpsa.org.au/grevSG/grev88.pdf>

A grevillea described as *Grevillea latrobei* was apparently collected from an un-named small creek that drained into the east side of Melton Reservoir, in the 1800's. Arnolds Creek perhaps? It grows to about 80cm in height. Apparently only a very few are left in the wild. It is also very similar to *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* "Lara Dwarf", (now also extinct in the wild).

Grevilleas are not as a rule seen locally so it is good that there are some that are native to our basalt plains. It could be a good species to plant on rocky escarpments beside our local creeks when restoring native vegetation. Hopefully cuttings will be taken from these if they thrive.

These suckering Grevilleas with their prickly foliage & low ground-hugging habit will provide excellent cover for vulnerable small birds such as Blue Wrens, thornbills & finches, not to mention reptiles like Bluetongue Lizards. Their flowers also provide nectar for honeyeaters. Perhaps it is time they were returned to the wild in Melton, especially since they have not been seen here since the 1880's! Both grevilleas have now been planted at Brookfield among the wildflowers.



Grevillea latrobei planted at Brookfield

Dame Phyllis Frost Project: Growing native plants for revegetation

MEG & Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group are both involved in an exciting project whereby the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre at the Women's Prison in Deer Park are growing seedlings for environmental revegetation from locally collected indigenous seeds supplied by local groups.

Earlier this year PLEG & MEG supplied the Centre with local indigenous seeds to grow wildflowers for sites in Melton & at Pinkerton Forest. The project is under the direction of indigenous plant expert Judy Allen. Judy is a TAFE teacher at the Centre teaching a course in Horticulture. Judy spoke to local environmental groups in May at Melton Shire Council. The Centre has grown a number of plants for local revegetation, which are now ready for planting.

The plants funded by Melbourne Water were planted beside Arnolds Creek. However, the Dame Phyllis Frost plants can be planted away from the creek, adjacent to the remnant woodland trees, near the Brookfield fence

Plants for MEG include:

Acacia pycnantha	170
Carex tereticaulis	30
Danthonia species	100
Linum marginale	29
Microseris species	13
Nicotiana suaveolens	12
Pycnosorus globosa	13
Vittadinia cuneata	54
Bracteantha viscosa syn	38
Eutaxia diffusa	88

Many thanks to Judy Allen & the women at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre for helping us restore our natural environment.

Planting at Brookfield Saturday 10th September

On Saturday 10th September Flo, Mary, Doug & Carmen of MEG were joined by 11 CVA volunteers at Brookfield. We planted about 800 plants beside Arnolds Creek near Brookfield Lifestyle Retirement Village in Black Dog Drive as part of the Arnolds Creek Biolink Project funded by a Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program grant.

Plants included:

Dianella longifolia
Blackwood
Lomandra
Gold-dust Wattle
Hedge Wattle
Varnish Wattle
Red Gum
Grey Box
Yellow Box
Hop Bush

Bursaria
Senna

The volunteers were employees of the Radisson Hotel in Melbourne. A deli platter was served at lunch, with hot & cold drinks & fruit. The volunteers were each presented with a MEG Certificate of Appreciation. Gillian & David donated 2 large thermoses to MEG. Flo also took the opportunity to remove Carpet Weed from the wildflower area. The following Sunday saw heavy rains which should help the plants' survival.

Many thanks to CVA & the employees from Radisson!





Planting at Brookfield with Radisson employees Saturday 10th September

Planting Wildflowers at Brookfield 19th October

On Wednesday 19th October Carmen & Daryl planted wildflowers grown by the women at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in the morning. In the afternoon Frances Overmars of PLEG assisted planting wildflowers supplied by Melton Shire here also. We planted about 100 plants on the day.

This followed several hundred wildflowers planted here over the previous couple of weeks, supplied by MEG & the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. Large numbers of earthworms from vegie garden mulch were buried with the plants, in an attempt to improve the quality of the dry powdery landfill soil.

Total wildflowers planted included:

- Murnong (Yam Daisy)
- Native Flax (Linum)
- Vittadinia Daisy
- Bulbine Lily
- Showy Podolepis
- Eremophila deserti
- Pelargonium rodneyanum
- Spur Velleia
- Eutaxia affinis
- Yellow Rushlily

Running Postman
Fragrant Saltbush
Dwarf Sunray
Plantago
Daisy (*Brachyscome basaltica* & *dentata*)



Dame Phyllis Frost Project

The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre have supplied MEG with about 1500 plants this year. MEG have already planted several hundred of these plants at Brookfield. Many of wildflowers have already been planted at Brookfield. Those plants that don't get planted this year will be planted next winter or perhaps later this year if *La Niña* conditions permit.

A Certificate of Appreciation will be presented to Judy Allen in appreciation for her efforts & of the women of the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. Their contribution to the restoration of the Arnolds Creek Biolink is greatly appreciated. These plants will add greatly to the biodiversity of the Brookfield site away from the creek, as well as making this site a more attractive sight to visit. We should see a spectacular wildflower display here next spring.

These wildflowers, shrubs & trees include:

Sticky Everlasting
Bulbine Lily
Wallaby Grass
Native Tobacco
Wahlenbergia luteola (*Native Bluebell*)
Yam Daisy
Varnish Wattle
Golden Wattle
Gold-dust Wattle
Eutaxia
Yellow Box
Linum

Carex tereticaulis

Weeding at Brookfield: Western Land Services

On 19th-20th January, Western Land Services (WLS) cleared weeds from our planting site beside Arnolds Creek at Brookfield. WLS's Peter Sell (also MEG's environmental advisor), with Shennae & Adam, removed weeds by brushcutting & spraying. Unfortunately, regular flooding makes weeds a recurring problem here. The brushcutters made short work of the weeds. Perhaps MEG may look into purchasing a brushcutter of our own, as per Peter's suggestion.





Peter & Adam weeding at Brookfield

Strategic Management Plan at Brookfield March 2012

MEG is to create a 2 year strategic Management Plan for Brookfield, to ensure our work here is more effectively planned into the future. Peter Sell's practical experience in environmental restoration with Western Land Services will be instrumental. Peter also suggests that perhaps it is time we used treeguards again as plants do so much better when guarded & we don't seem to be troubled by vandalism at Brookfield.

Brookfield planning meeting & sign placement



Doug & Peter placing sign on side fence

On Saturday 26th May Peter, Doug & Daryl met for a planning meeting at Brookfield, to plan our future environmental activities here. Peter's experience with Western Land Services proved valuable in planning environmental actions at Brookfield. We were joined by bird enthusiast (& hopeful new MEG member Geraldine).

We also placed a sign acknowledging Melbourne Water's role in the environmental restoration of Brookfield. Another will be placed on posts facing Black Dog Drive.

We hope to replace the rampant ugly weeds in the stormwater drain with native reeds & sedges, as well as other native wetland plants.

MEG management plan for Brookfield in 2012

- Restoration of ugly weed-choked storm drain
- Planting riparian trees & understory plants where the drain meets the creek
- Revegetation of creekside between drain & last year's planting site.
- Placing wetland plants in areas subject to flooding
- Enhancement planting in the centre plantation
- Placing mulch over wildflower site to prepare for Tree Planting Day

- Better control of creekside weeds

Working Bee at Brookfield

On Saturday 23rd June MEG had a working bee at Brookfield. Carmen, Geraldine, Doug, Peter Sell & Daryl shifted over 10 meters of mulch. The 2 piles of mulch have been maturing in the open for 2 years have now been spread on the ground. We spread mulch around the small plantation of trees in the middle of the park. Later we will plant shrubs & understory plants here. We also spread mulch along the edge of the small Grey Box woodland near the side fence, beside the track; thereby eliminating some anomalies by filling in some logical inclusions. Many of the wildflowers already planted here in previous years are surviving, despite the dry powdery landfill soil. This coming spring we expect an impressive display of local wildflowers here.

National Tree Planting Day at Brookfield

On Sunday 27th July MEG participated in Planet Ark National Treeplanting Day. Carmen, Jenny, Doug, Daryl & Peter Sell were joined by John Smith where we planted about 250 plants beside Arnolds Creek at Brookfield in Black Dog Drive.

We planted *Acacia retinoides*, Woolly Teatree, River Bottlebrush & Blue Box trees beside Arnolds Creek & by the drain recently identified by Peter Sell as being suitable for restoration. We also planted *Carex tereticaulis* beside the drain.

In the 'island' in the middle of the reserve, also identified by Peter as suitable of restoration, we planted:

Hedge, Varnish, Gold-dust & Golden Wattle,
Eutaxia (Bush Pea),
 Fragrant Saltbush,
 Turkey Bush,
Melicetyis,
Bursaria,
Indigofera,
Dianella amoena,
Plantago,
Rubus parvilolia (native raspberry),
 Kangaroo Grass,
 Silky Bluegrass,
Stipa elegantissima.

This should eventually be a colourful mass of flowering bushes, as well as providing a prickly safe haven for small birds to hide in, safe from marauding neighbouring cats. Many of these plants were grown by women at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. We were joined by a fan club of 2 Willy Wagtails that continually followed us as we planted, investigating the recently dug up soil in search of insects.

There was also a pair of Wood Ducks that were investigating the wildlife boxes (built by Melton Mens Shed & painted by students of Coburns Primary School). We had prepared the site by spreading mulch in June & drilled the holes earlier in the week with out posthole digger, making planting on the day much more efficient.



Lunch at Brookfield



Wood Duck investigating nest box at Brookfield

Planting at Brookfield

On Saturday 11th August Geraldine, Jenny, Doug & Daryl planted 70 wildflowers at Brookfield, despite the constant showers. These included *Pelargonium australe*, *Linum* & *Plantago* sp, as well as a massed planting of *Bulbine Lily*. We also planted several *Eremophila deserti* & *Indigofera australis*.

The soil had been covered by a large pile of mulch for over two years, which we removed & spread across the planting sites last month. The site was still covered by over 15cm of mulch so the soil was dry & hard, despite all the recent rain. We had to alternately mattock & soak with water several times before we could plant (as we had to do back during the drought!). Copious bluestone screenings scattered through the soil (evidence of soil dumping) did not assist digging! This was a very time consuming process, resulting in a reduced number of plants being planted. We replaced the mulch to a depth of 2-3 cm of to enable rain to soak into the soil. The *Carex tereticaulis* we planned to place beside the storm drain remained unplanted as the morning's rain

On Saturday 25th August Daryl, Jenny, Bronwyn, Paul, Thomas & Annabel visited Brookfield where we planted about 50 plants.

About 30 *Senna*, *Linum*, *Lomandra*, *Plantago* were planted in the small 'island' plantation & 20 wetland plants were planted in the damp areas along the drain running through the centre of the park:

Basalt Daisy

Nardoo

Lobelia pratioides

Ficinia nodosa

Billy Buttons

Drumsticks

Chorizandra enodis

Juncus flavidus

Once again, a Wood Duck was photographed looking out of the painted nestbox.

Working Bee at Brookfield

On Sunday 25th November Carmen, Jenny, Bronwyn, Peter S, Doug, Daryl, & Paul, accompanied by Khloe & Thomas, worked at Brookfield, spreading mulch over the wildflowers beside Arnolds Creek in Black Dog Drive. The pile of mulch was quickly removed in a little over an hour & spread over the dry bare soil. The powdery landfill soil is highly hygroscopic, & even after rain, quickly dries out; as the rain is unable to penetrate very deeply. A healthy layer of mulch will help keep moisture in the soil. The understory plants & wildflowers we have planted here over the last few years are growing well despite the inhospitable site, but the mulch should help them grow much more healthily.



Peter & Carmen spreading mulch

ARNOLDS CREEK BIOLINK PROJECT BROOKFIELD SITE: 2013

Jewel Beetle at Brookfield

This large, 4 cm long crimson-coloured Variable Jewel Beetle, (*Temognatha variabilis*) was found at our restoration site at Brookfield in January 2013. It was found among the wildflowers we planted in the mulch last year under the Grey Box patch near the village. It may have fallen from the Grey Box tree above after the morning's rain.

Small blue & gold Jewels Beetles, about 1 cm long, can be found in Long Forest Mallee, on Teatree blossoms; but this beetle is spectacular, to say the least. Discovery of this magnificent beetle is something of a surprise & indicative of the diversity of Melton wildlife.

According to '*The Insects of Australia*' (CSIRO) Jewel Beetles '*include some of the most brilliantly coloured of all insects*'.

Details of Variable Jewel Beetle on:
http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_jewelbeetles/VariableJewel.htm; & other info on Jewel Beetles in general (Buprestidae) can be seen on:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buprestidae>; &
<http://www.ces.csiro.au/aicn/system/bupresti.htm>;



Variable Jewel Beetle, (*Temognatha variabilis*) at Brookfield

Watering at Brookfield,

On Saturday 2nd February Geraldine, Jenny, Doug & Daryl met at Brookfield beside Arnolds Creek to water plants. Since September 2012 there has been hardly any rain & the soil was hard & dry, even after recent rain at the end of January.

Several heat wave days in December & January have taken a heavy toll of plants in Melton. Despite some watering in January some plants are already withered, although some of these could recover. Heavy rains at the very end of February were very welcome, & may save some plants!

The recent heat waves have taken a visible toll on native plants that have been planted locally, not just ours. Around Melton & even along the Western Highway between Melton & Deer Park many plants that have been planted along the wide medium strip appear withered & brown. However, many more are surviving, proving the overall resilience of native plants, especially those indigenous to this region. This graphically illustrates that we should be planting locally indigenous plants, from local provenance, as they are adapted to local weather extremes.



Doug & Geraldine watering at Brookfield

Clean Up Australia Day

On Sunday 3rd March MEG participated in Cleanup Australia by cleaning up at our planting site at Brookfield. A total of 11 people participated, including Carmen, Jenny, Peter, Doug & Daryl of MEG were joined by visitors Karen, Khloe, Judith, Mehmet, Mayette & Aida. We picked up a total of 16 bags, mainly from storm drains, close to the road & close to fencelines. This was one more than last year's total of 15 bags.

Again, takeaway food wrappings & drink containers comprised the bulk of the rubbish collected. An unusual discovery was a small pet dog buried beside the creek had been uncovered by floodwaters. Fortunately only dried skin & bones remained in the mouldering pillow cover that was its shroud! There was even a discarded broken boogie board beside a neighbouring fence.

All adjourned to Hannah Watts Parks afterward for a BBQ supplied by City of Melton.



Cleaning up at Brookfield 2013

Working Bee at Brookfield Saturday 20th April

On Saturday 20th April Carmen, Doug & Daryl of MEG met at our revegetation site at Brookfield beside Arnolds Creek where we cleaned up prior to commencing planting later this year. We tidied up old stakes & stacked them for future re-use.

We discovered 11 tree saplings that were growing as ground covers due to mowing activities. We placed treeguards around them to prevent them being constantly mown down in future. We also found a Red Gum but we were unable to find it again to protect it also, as it was hidden in the short grass. Next time perhaps. It is always more effective to protect existing naturally-grow plants than it is to plant new ones.

We also walked the creekside & identified areas where we need to do some replanting. We looked for the Greater Egret that can often be seen from the freeway but instead we found this Yellow-billed Spoonbill feeding in the creek beside the bridge.



Doug & Carmen staking tree seedlings at Brookfield



Yellow-billed Spoonbill at Brookfield

Brookfield: May 2013

In May Peter & Daryl had a meeting at Brookfield with Brookfields residents (Bev Dutton) & Melbourne Water (Alanna Wright & Brendan Martin).

The residents are keen to start a group so that they can clean up along the creek & plant some trees, hoping for some assistance from Melbourne Water. After some discussion they are keen to join MEG. There were 6 people wishing to join & they suggest there may be a few more.

Peter Sell had an on-site meeting with Brendan from Melbourne Water, after the residents' meeting, discussing practicalities of working in the creek.

Melbourne Water will do a cleanup run here later & will also plant trees beside Arnolds Creek here: 100 Red Gum, 50 Black Wattles & 50 Sheokes.

Winter Solstice: Planting at Brookfield

On Saturday 22nd June MEG commemorated the Winter Solstice by resuming planting at at Arnolds Creek beside Brookfield. Participants were Carmen, Geraldine, Jenny, Doug, Daryl & a visitor, Rick. We had delayed our planting until rain made this viable. Despite all our recent rain the soil around the Grey Box trees was still dry & hard in many places, although like the curate's proverbial egg, some spots were better than others. Planting in this landfill soil is a perpetual challenge. We also planted in the central 'island' in which we began planting last year.

We planted a variety of shrubs, ground covers & wildflowers, to complement the shrubs we planted in previous years & to create an understory to the small number of remnant Grey Box trees that remain on the site. We planted about 200 plants, included those supplied by Melton City, Melbourne Water & those grown by women at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, under the direction of horticultural teacher Judy Allen.

These included:

Gold-dust Wattle

Senna

Kennedia

Chrysocephalum

Linum

Bidgee Widgee

Ruby Saltbush

Eutaxia microphylla

Melicytus

Plantago

Indigofera

Dianella longifolia

Eutaxia affinis

Lomandra micrantha

Prickly Moses

Turkey Bush

Clematis

Indigofera

Bursaria
Atriplex semibaccata
Grevillea latrobei (1)



Carmen & Geraldine planting at Brookfield

Meeting at Brookfield June 26th

On Wednesday 26th June Daryl of MEG met with Linda Bradburn (Melton Environmental Education Officer) & Barry of Village Lifestyle Village. About beginning planting on the new site Linda & Daryl marked out a large planting site to begin the project. This should effectively act as both a windbreak & a sound barrier between the village & the freeway. Arnolds Creek can be something of a wind tunnel in high north winds.

About 6-10 trees would be plenty for this initial 'island'. This would be complemented with about 25 understory plants. Trees could include Yellow Box & Bulokes. Understory plants such as Senna, Eutaxia (bush pea) & local wattles should ensure both biodiversity & a colourful splash of different colours. We could drill planting holes a couple of days prior to planting. This makes for much more time-effective planting days, & we get more trees planted this way.

We should begin planting here on Planet Ark National Tree Day on Sunday 28th July.

Melton Environment Group

Arnolds Creek Biolink Project (Brookfield Village)

Funded by grants by: Melton Shire & Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority



Linda & Bruce at new planting site at Brookfield

Planet Ark National Tree Day 28th July 2013
First planting at new site at Brookfield

On Sunday 28th July MEG participated in Planet Ark National Treeday activity at Brookfield.

25 people planted about 400 plants. These were the first plants at our new site at Brookfield & our new partnership with the residents of Brookfield Lifestyle Retirement Village.

One initial 'island' beside the freeway on-ramp had been prepared several weeks prior to planting, to prevent competition from weeds. As this planting was such a success we may be able to return here to plant another such 'island'. MEG's KABV Protection of the Environment Award was given its first public display, to the group!

200 holes were dug several days prior to planting, to enable more time-effective planting. 10 trees were planted, complemented with about 200 understory plants. Trees could include Yellow Box & a couple of Blue Box. Understory plants such as Senna, Eutaxia (bush pea) & local wattles, (Gold-dust, Golden & Prickly Moses Wattles) as well as local wildflowers (Bulbine Lilies, Indigofera, Running Postman, Sticky Everlastings, Basalt Daisy, Pelargonium & Pimelia should ensure both biodiversity & a colourful splash of different colours.

However, we soon had all the plants planted, so we had to fetch more plants! We soon filled the 'island' & moved on to another site to continue planting. We planted these beside Arnolds creek at the site we had planted two years ago, complementing the original plantings with additional understory plants. Our efforts were rewarded were by a welcome shower of rain later that day (although a good downpour would have been even more welcome).

Hot & cold drinks were supplied by MEG, as well as refreshments that were funded by City of Melton. Many thanks to City of Melton.



Planting beside freeway at Brookfield



Lunch at Brookfield



Daryl & Thomas planting at Brookfield

Biodiversity at Brookfield: Lizard Lounges

Several old roof tiles have been placed on the ground beneath the understory we have planted among the remnant Grey Box trees at Brookfield. These have been covered with mulch to enhance their insulation value; & also prevent their appearing unsightly.

This has been inspired by monitoring projects in some nature reserves around Melton whereby tiles have been placed on the ground as a means of monitoring for the presence of Legless Lizards. It has been observed that these tiles, as well as other debris in paddocks around Melton become home for a variety of small wildlife. These include Blue-tongued Lizards, small skinks, frogs, & a large variety of invertebrates



Roof tile concealed beneath Fragrant Saltbush



Colorbond metal 'lizard lounge' concealed under Fragrant Saltbush

Although invisible to the casual observer these will hopefully enhance the wildlife habitat value of the sites we are revegetating. These 'lizard lounges' should also provide a means of monitoring the return of otherwise cryptic wildlife to Brookfield.

Biodiversity at Brookfield: Case Moths ;



Saunders Case Moth cocoons

Recently about 20 Saunders Case Moth (aka Bagmoths) cocoons were placed in trees at Brookfield. These moths, taken from a nearby garden, should add to the biodiversity at Brookfield. As our trees & shrubs grow our insect diversity should correspondingly increase also. Apparently ravens are predators of these insects although their cocoons made from sticks over a silken base should protect them from many smaller birds. Female moths spend their lives in the stick-covered cocoons. Their flightless nature limits their chances for dispersal, even over short distances, so their return to Brookfield may need some assistance. Details on: <http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/discovery-centre-news/2009-archive/case-moths/>