

MERRI CROWLER

The Friends of Merri Creek Newsletter

February – April 2014

Friends of Merri Creek is the proud winner of the 2011 Victorian Urban Landcare Award

Results of 2013 Annual General Meeting

Twenty-two members attended the FoMC Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 20 November 2013 and heard an inspiring talk from FoMC Life Member and flora and fauna expert, Brian Bainbridge.

Brian showed us stunning photos revealing nature's resilience along Merri Creek and its response to human helping hands. He said that it was easy to be pessimistic in these times, but Merri Creek provides a source of hope and resilience - signs of life and strength. The natural regeneration and fauna sightings act as natural auditors of the work done by FoMC and MCMC. This work is strengthened by the fact that other organisations and the community share our vision.

He said that the recovery and resilience was completely unexpected and it is great to see Merri Creek providing a true habitat corridor. It all means that nature is clearly our partner, not our patient.

The following members were elected to the 2014 Committee:

Office Bearers:

President: David Redfearn

Vice-President: Ann McGregor

Secretary: Ray Radford

Treasurer: Nicole Lowe

Membership Secretary: Monica Williamson

Committee Members: Yasmin Kelsall & Nick Williams

The Committee remains the same as in 2013. However, if you're interested in becoming a Committee member in the future, you're welcome to see what we do by attending meetings and receiving Agendas (phone Ray on 0422 989 166 or email: merricreek@bigpond.com)

Sub-Committee Coordinators:

Regeneration Group: Nicole Lowe

Litter Group: Paul Prentice

Streamteam: Irene Baker

Newsletter (layout): Dean Lombard

These coordinators remain the same as in 2013.

Representatives to MCMC

FoMC will be represented on the Merri Creek Management Committee by Ann McGregor, Allie Dawe, Nicole Lowe, Pascale Pitot, Nick Williams and Ann Sanson.

This line-up is similar to 2013, except that Nick Williams remains after replacing long-term representative, Paul Prentice in March 2013, and Ann Sanson has stepped up from being a Substitute Representative to replace Louise Wright, who has now become a Substitute Representative following the birth of baby Frank in March 2013.

FoMC has a new Website address

After our being hosted free by the State Library of Victoria's VicNet since starting our website, VicNet has told us that this must end. So our new host is Web Central and our new web address is:

www.friendsofmerricreek.org.au

Substitute Reps to MCMC

Along with Louise Wright, Suzi Shaw and Rebecca Mayo are our new Substitute Representatives, while David Redfearn, Yasmin Kelsall and Ian Patrick remain from 2013. Suzi Shaw looks after our Facebook page, and Rebecca Mayo walked the length of Merri Creek in March 2013.

FoMC to join Sustainable Population Australia (SPA)

Paul Prentice's motion to join SPA was passed (by 10 votes to 4 with 8 abstentions) in recognition that increasing population is a major factor in the invasion of our grasslands by suburban sprawl. SPA's newsletter, which appears in the even months, will be available for reading at the MCMC office. Also see their website: www.population.org.au

Ray Radford Secretary

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Merri Musings

Successful Grants: \$20,000 from the Port Phillip & Westernport CMA for the project *Stages in Restoration - Stony Knolls in Kalkallo*, for re-establishing shrubs and continuing weed control in areas where woody weeds have already been removed. It will establish an access track that will also serve as a fire break, and continue woody weed removal efforts along the eastern boundary of Donnybrook Cemetery. The community planting is on 22 June.

\$19,997 from the Melbourne Water River Health Incentives program for the project *Gorge-ous Views! Restoring the Merri Creek habitat Corridor at Northcote Gorge*, for weed control and planting of the east bank and escarpment of Merri Creek north of Heidelberg Rd Northcote. This is a new site for us and we hope to engage the nearby public housing tenants and football club members in the community planting on 15 June.

\$7543.80 from Darebin City Council for planting around the revamped children's playground at Merri Park Northcote. The community planting is on 19 July.

\$500 from Parks Victoria for tools to help with our woody weed removals at Bababi Marning.

Mission Impossible accomplished: Last year we achieved the very significant goal of clearing the woody weed bushes from Block A at Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grassland). Yes, the Gorse is gone, Broom has been swept and Briar Rose was nipped in the bud – plus

some Boxthorn, Brassica and a few thistles as well! But we're not stopping there, as we now aim to do the same with Block B. You too can enjoy the immediate rewards of liberating the grasslands – see the calendar, starting on 9/2.



The FoMC 'Impossible Mission' force at Bababi Marning after a job well done on 24 November 2013.

Ongoing Grants: We are now in our third year of our two four-year Australian Government Communities for Nature Grants that we started in 2012: *Continuing and extending Golden Sun Moth density and habitat surveys* and *Galada Tamboore grassland and escarpment restoration: bringing the management together*. Both projects are proceeding well but there have been a few challenges in surveying Golden Sun Moths as they are proving very hard to find. The Dianellas are growing well at Galada Tamboore and we are preparing for the next burn.

2014 Regeneration Activities: FoMC has made a revolutionary change from our usual routine, in planning our activities for the year: a number of events at Merri

Park Northcote will be held on a Saturday afternoon – provided we receive the funding. See our calendar on the back page and check our website under "What's On."

Brunswick Terminal Station Campaign: On Wednesday November 13, Moreland Council unanimously supported calls by the NOBTS66 campaign (led by the Merri Creek Residents Group) to prosecute SPAusnet for vegetation removal and excavation works that have been done without a proper permit. The Council also supported the NOBTS66 campaign's position that the Planning Minister decline further exemptions to SPAusnet to alter the agreed landscaping plans.

Follow the campaign on:
www.nobrunswickterminalstation.org/

MECCARG Murnong Gathering: Thanks to support from Moreland City Council, with \$1000 from Moreland Community Grants Program and \$550 for the Welcome to Country, MECCARG was able to stage another successful Murnong Gathering on Saturday 9 November 2013. After a welcome to country and smoking ceremony at the old Pentridge quarry site with Wurundjeri Elders, about 40 local people made ochre hand prints and pictures on the quarry wall. Wurundjeri women Elders led a group of women to the where the Murnong grow and showed how to harvest them using traditional digging sticks. Harvested Murnong was then cooked in earth ovens. (See photo on back page.)

Free Field Guide apps: The Museum of Victoria has a free app: *Field Guide to Victorian Fauna*. It is available for Apple and Android devices from <http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/museum-victoria-apps/mv-field-guide-to-victoria-app/>.

Ecolinc likewise released an app for Apple in mid-2013 *Biodiversity of the Western Volcanic Plains Flora and Fauna Field Guide*, available free from the App Store. Ecolinc is collaborating with the University of Melbourne to expand the current app in 2014 to include grasslands across south-eastern Australia.

New Friends of Malcolm Creek website: Our sub-group Friends of Malcolm Creek has a wonderful new website, courtesy of a \$4,796 Community Grant from Hume City Council. See: <http://www.fomcg.com.au/>

A place for Jack: On Wednesday 23 October, the family of ex FoMC Office Coordinator, Jack Svendsen, held an "opening ceremony" at the seat/low table that they established in his memory at the MECCARG site, downstream of Murray Rd Coburg. The family toasted Jack's memory with wine from his own cellar and planted a Red Box tree, compliments of Moreland City Council. The day would have been Jack's 84th birthday and it was just over 12 months since he passed away on 19/10/2012.



President's Report 2013

Edited from the report given at the AGM on 20 November 2013

I thank all members for their commitment during the year, those who held office and those who organised and carried out the many tasks, no matter how great or how small. Special thanks to our Secretary, Ray Radford, whose efforts make the job of the committee so much easier, and to my fellow committee members for their active and constructive participation in our meetings throughout the year.

The Secretary's Report (*see newsletter November 2013*) covers our activities very comprehensively, so I will comment on some of the major issues of 2013.

Urban Growth Boundary expansion and threats to our biodiversity

In 2012, Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary was expanded into the green wedges and around Wallan, but the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was only released as a draft afterwards. Worse still, the subsequent final version revealed even more scaled-back protection of our grasslands and endangered fauna, which could mean a possible local extinction of the Growling Grass Frog near Lockerbie.

We have been advocating for many years for a conservation reserve network across the upper Merri catchment that would protect and sustain the wildlife, native wildflower grasslands, ancient River Red Gums, wetlands and waterways corridors. It seems that our proposals, and comments on the draft Growth Corridor Plan, have been ignored by the State Government and the 'planners' at the Growth Areas Authority (whose role seems to be to facilitate urban growth, not conservation).

We have made representations to government and have supported the continuing campaign of the Green Wedges Coalition to ensure that there is no compromise on the erosion of our Green Wedges, and pointed out the need to protect high conservation value grassland sites within the growth areas. There was some limited success in scaling back some of the logical inclusions, but the proposed changes are far from perfect.

Despite representations to Federal Minister Tony Burke and his successor, Mark Butler, to intervene using his powers under the EPBC Act, Minister Butler approved the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy in late July just before the 2013 Federal Election was called.

We worked with the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) and the Environment Defenders Office (EDO) to strengthen our case with Ministers Burke and Butler. I can't praise highly enough the tremendous support we received from Yasmin Kelsall, Matt Ruchel and Andrew Booth at the VNPA, Nick Croggon and later Felicity Millner at the EDO, and of course Rosemary West at the Green Wedges Coalition. Our own Ann McGregor also contributed enormously to this. Presently, we are examining our options under the process.

2013 Members' survey

Yasmin Kelsall, who is also a member of our committee, conducted a survey of our membership and the resulting information will be invaluable in helping us set our direction over the next year. We received 90 responses to the survey which was phenomenal in itself. A few unsurprising revelations were that most of us are over 45 years of age and the vast majority have been members for over four years. While stability is a great thing, we would love to be engaging younger people more, as they are our future. The overall story is a good one though and many of our activities enjoy great favour with our membership, especially planting and weeding, but also bird-watching and walks and talks.

Challenges for 2014

I see some of our key priorities for 2014 as being:

- Following up on the members' survey and implementing the suggestions where possible;
- Supporting the campaign against the East-West Link;
- Working with other groups, the community and government to ensure appropriate development along the whole of the Merri, but particularly in the upper Merri, and to secure the protection of sites of environmental significance;
- Continued support for the community campaign against the redevelopment of the Brunswick Terminal Station;
- A continued commitment to the good governance and the operations of the MCMC, in which FoMC has always played a very significant role;
- Exploring opportunities to further educate and engage our community in the values of the creek and its environs;
- Engaging and building the capacity of our membership, the next generation and succession planning.

David Redfearn OAM President 2013



Say NO to East-West Link

In response to the Linking Melbourne Authority's misnamed Comprehensive Impact Statement (CIS), Friends of Merri Creek has made a submission to Planning Panels Victoria outlining our concerns about East-West Link.

While the impacts of the project on the environment of inner Melbourne and Royal Park in particular are very detrimental (the destruction of most of the last bit of remnant vegetation in the City of Melbourne, loss of approximately 9.3 ha of the park, impact on the zoo), we restricted the submission to the effects on the Merri Creek.

Impacts on Merri Creek have not been considered

No aquatic assessment of the impacts of East-West Link on the Merri Creek was conducted for the CIS. The reasoning was that no in-stream structures will be built. However, by building lanes between the existing Eastern Freeway overpasses, East-West Link would cast continuous deep shade over 80 m of the Merri Creek, reducing light levels in the creek significantly, potentially affecting fish, frog and platypus movement and prevent plant growth along the creek banks. The creation of this overshadowing has been dismissed as having no impact by the CIS without adequate reasoning. We argue that an assessment of the impacts on Merri Creek's aquatic biota needs to be undertaken so that the considerable investment in stream habitat restoration along the creek is not undermined by a new barrier to fauna movement.

Loss of connectivity along the Merri Creek trail during construction

Given construction of East-West Link is expected to take five years, FoMC is very concerned about the loss of connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians in the Dights Falls area. The bicycle track that travels along Merri Creek under the eastern freeway is a popular recreational and commuter trail that needs to be kept open during construction. Other freeway construction projects, such as the upgrading of the Monash Freeway at Burnley, have kept bicycle tracks closed for many months, resulting in severe inconvenience that would never have been inflicted on car commuters. This cannot be allowed to happen to the Merri Creek Trail.

East-West Link would lead to significant future impacts on Merri Creek

We are particularly concerned with the opportunities that would be lost due to the East-West Link and the potential environmental, cultural and economic costs of this. To this end the East-West Link project needs to be considered in conjunction with the recommendations of the Doncaster Rail Study.

Because East-West Link would take over the central median of the Eastern Freeway from the

Yarra Bend Road to Hoddle Street, that was originally reserved for railway, the preferred Doncaster rail option (Rapid Transit Route 1) would be forced to cross the Dights Falls area on a viaduct and dive into a tunnel beneath Trenerry Crescent.

FoMC is extremely concerned that if built this would destroy a popular recreation area with many environmental values, and even a listing on the register of the National Estate due to its Aboriginal and European heritage. Consequently East-West Link would potentially lead to serious future impacts on Merri Creek by preventing any future Doncaster Rail line following the alignment that has been reserved for it since the 1960's. This was to either join the Clifton Hill line at Victoria Park or continue to the proposed Metro station at Parkville reached via a relatively inexpensive cut and cover tunnel along Alexandra Parade.

What you can do if you oppose East-West Link

The Merri Creek community has a long and successful history of opposing ill-conceived freeway projects and East-West Link is no exception. The State Government's expensive spin doctoring via TV and press advertisements is designed to convince Victorians that the project is a certainty. This is not the case, as strong community opposition can force governments to change their priorities – which usually revolve around staying in power. To this end FoMC, with many other groups, has joined the City of Yarra's *Trains not Toll Roads* campaign as a supporting organisation. (See <http://trainsnottollroads.com.au/the-campaign/>). We urge members to take action by contacting State and Federal politicians (listed on the trainsnottollroads website) to express their concerns about the effect of the project on the environment, its huge cost (to be borne by taxpayers for decades to come) and the lack of a transparent business case. If East-West Link proceeds, the much better public transport solutions to Melbourne's traffic problems will not be financially possible for a generation.

Nick Williams FoMC Committee member

Royal Park Melbourne would suffer even more if the East-West Link went ahead. This is an aerial photo of Royal Park as it is currently – from the Friends of Royal Park website.



Yet again the motorway threat

The Naphthine State Government has set out to make its mark on Melbourne in the worst possible way, proposing East-West Link, an environmentally and financially destructive inner-suburban toll road – not flagged before the 2010 election.

The fight is on, as it was six and fifteen years ago, to stop this folly. Big businesses naturally support it, they won't get their fingers burnt as in Sydney and Brisbane: their profits will be guaranteed, any losses will be borne by taxpayers. The figures behind the dubious 1.4:1 cost-benefit ratio have necessarily been kept secret (Sir Rod Eddington's report estimated 0.5:1), there must have been some pretty creative accounting, to put it politely. The traffic projections also appear fanciful, as is often the case in these matters.

The Government's awareness that the project will not stand up to critical examination is starkly revealed by measures to stifle debate, to gag speakers at public hearings, rule out any issue it deems to be "marginal". It is desperate to steamroll the thing through, with contracts to be signed only months before the November election. Its talk of cutting "procedural delays and red tape" represents a further intensifying of the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act, which removes the need for an environmental impact assessment, and limits public consultation and the ability of people affected by major projects to take legal action. And the Transport Minister has the gall, the refusal to recognise what democracy is about, to pretend that people's rights will not be infringed because *written* submissions (which do not get the message across to a wider audience) will still be possible; similarly the Local Government Minister who has suggested that Yarra Council is not legally entitled to campaign against the tunnel. It's like Humpty Dumpty's sinister response to Alice's objection "The question is whether one *can* make a word mean so many different things": "The question is, which is to be Master – that's all."

The principle "We won't solve our problems by using the same kind of thinking that caused them" has no chance of getting through to the motorway fanatics, who on seeing increased road capacity inevitably filling up with induced traffic, naturally call for even more. Melbourne is doubly impacted by its unsustainable 80,000-odd per annum population growth, that's an extra million every twelve years, and its carpooling-phobic commuters, with

1.2 average occupants per vehicle during peak hours, both figures the worst in Australia: we're headed for gridlock. Yet the Government wants to put eight billion eggs in one basket, instead of spreading the money around where it would do more good and far less harm: triplication on the Dandenong line, articulated buses, more level-crossing eliminations e.g. at Reservoir (but I regard the expensive "Metro" tunnel as superfluous, and trams as the best solution for Doncaster).

By contrast, the East-West would destroy the homes of some, and ruin the quality of life of those who are left to suffer the noise and air-pollution of vastly increased traffic; and further encroach on Royal Park, as if it wasn't bad enough that the whole west side had been filched on the excuse of housing athletes during a brief stay.

At the forefront of this struggle are the gallant, determined protestors from Clifton Hill to Parkville, whom I have had the privilege of joining at times. How contemptuous is the Transport Minister in calling them or supporters of Royal Park "rent-a-crowd"; the cost to the taxpayer of the police presence, when the useless Link would cost us hundreds of thousands of times more.

But people's health and feelings and the loss of their homes' value are of no concern to the bureaucrats, nor is the fact that Australia has the world's highest per-capita greenhouse gas emissions, besides those from its massive coal and gas exports. These contribute to climate change, ice melt, and rising sea levels which would flood all the seaports and low-lying coastlands in the world, at near-incalculable financial and human cost. The politicians *should* care, if they are interested in our long-term future.

What about those of us who are deeply concerned about our city and our planet? We must let our municipal, State and Federal representatives, including those who are on our side and deserve our commendation, know our views on the matter, by letter or if possible in person; emphasise that our democratic rights are being trampled on here, and our resources misdirected, with no electoral mandate; and declare that modest, rational public transport projects are best for our society and environment and

for Melbourne's efficient functioning.

Paul Prentice



Aerial view of how Royal Park Melbourne would look if the East-West Link went ahead – from the Friends of Royal Park website.

Birds along the Merri in true spring

Our November bird surveys recorded a total of 79 species. The most common species were Pacific Black Duck (estimated 139), Rainbow Lorikeet (129), Red Wattlebird (127) and Common Starling (116). The Australian Magpie was the only species recorded at all ten survey sites, but Pacific Black Duck, Red Wattlebird, Little Raven, Welcome Swallow, Common Blackbird and Common Myna were seen at nine sites.

The mild weather through spring has encouraged a prolonged breeding season, and seven species were recorded as nesting.

The sites with the greatest number of species were Galgi Ngarrk / Craigieburn Grasslands (37) and Coburg Lake Reserve (36).

The highlight at Galada Tamboore was a beautiful Satin Flycatcher. Nicole Spillane was much less pleased to see two goats on the east side of the Creek (see photo). According to MCMC staff, the goats have been on the loose in Galada for about a year, and are likely to be eating flowers of *Dianella perfragens* and the endangered *Dianella amoena*, among other things.

Another unwelcome sighting was the first Noisy Miner in Bababi Djinanang, Fawkner. These aggressive natives drive out many other birds from their territory.

A Tawny Frogmouth nest in ironbarks near Roseneath Street Bridge, Clifton Hill was first seen by Ruth and Des Shiel on 14 September. By the time of the survey on 10 November, the single fledgling had left the nest and was starting to move along the branch between the two adults. Frogmouths seem to be multiplying thereabouts: on the previous day, two of the Clifton Hill survey participants saw 13 of them along the Merri and the Yarra between Dights Falls and Fairfield Boathouse. Ruth and Des also reported that Buff-banded Rails seem to have taken up residence in the wetland near the rotunda in Hall Reserve.

At Galgi Ngarrk, Euan Fothergill saw a juvenile Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo that appeared to be co-habiting with a pair of Superb Fairy-wrens, suggesting that they may have reared it. Infestations of woody and other weeds continue to spread in this Parks Victoria reserve.

Ann McGregor Birdwatch Coordinator



Two feral goats, an unusual sighting for the bird survey at Galada Tamboore. Photo: Nicole Spillane.

Dick's Witticisms

Some more witty one-liners from FoMC
Life Member, Dick Harcourt:

Never mistake a motion for action.

People who jump to conclusions
rarely alight on them.

Diplomacy is the art of letting
someone else have your say.

Flattery is telling the other person exactly
what he/she thinks of him/herself.

First Merri Birdwatch survey for 2014

Bird surveys will be held from 8.45–10.30am at ten sites along Merri Creek as listed below. Beginners welcome, BYO binoculars if possible, but no dogs please, as they reduce the number and variety of birds to be seen. The contact for all Birdwatch events is Ann McGregor 0429 386 102.

Free leaflets on Merri Birds (normally \$2) are available for all participants

Surveys at the following nine sites are on 16 February and 18 May

Bababi Djinanang (Jukes Rd Grasslands), Fawkner: Meet on the Merri Path at the end of Jukes Road, Fawkner (Melway 18 A2).

Egan Reserve – Harding Street – Strettle Reserve –

Normanby Avenue: Meet at the bluestone steps at the end of The Grove, East Coburg (Melway 30 A3).

Coburg Lake Reserve: Meet near the car park, Lake Grove, Coburg (Melway 17 H10).

Edwardes Lake: Meet at the playground adjacent to Griffiths Street, Reservoir (Melway 18 E5).

CERES – Moreland Road: Meet at the seats on the Merri Path at rear of CERES, East Brunswick (Melway 30 B7).

Merri Park and Phillips Reserve: Meet at the end of Victoria Street, East Brunswick, at the BBQ shelter (Melway 30 B8).

Hall Reserve – Yarra Bend Park: Meet at the Rotunda, Hall Reserve, Clifton Hill (Melway 2D D1).

Galgi Ngaark (Craigieburn Grasslands): Meet at O'Herns Road gate off Hume Highway, Somerton (Melway 180 E6).

Galada Tamboore: Meet at the end of Hatty Court, Campbellfield (Melway 7 K6).

Surveys at Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands) are on 23 February and 25 May

Meet near the Istrian Club, Cooper Street, Campbellfield (Melway 180 K10).

Friends of Edgars Creek Focus

Friends of Edgars Creek is again poised for another year of 'dedication to the cause' with a full calendar of events in the planning, agendas to pursue and relationships to foster and build.

2014 will see us complete our 2012-14 strategic plan; a document that has guided our revegetation and lobbying efforts for the past two years and will also serve to underpin a new 3-year strategic plan. Our 2012-14 plan has been formally endorsed by the Moreland City Council (MCC) and is a reference document to the Edgars Creek Master Plan that has now been approved by the MCC. Great news for our creek and the natural environment in Moreland (and part of Darebin CC's area as well – extending up to Edwardes Lake).

A number of challenges lie ahead for 2014 and beyond. Coburg Hill (the former Kodak site) is continuing to undergo development. There's a large supermarket and retail precinct under construction in Elizabeth St Coburg and roads are making their way towards the creek reserve. In time we will see the entire site opened up and interfacing with the creek reserve.

FoEC has worked constructively with the developers and we have been able to provide input on a number of major pieces of infrastructure on the site, including a proposed sedimentation pond that is planned for close to the Kodak Bridge. We have also been able to provide commentary on plans for revegetation around the bridge – before they were submitted to council! We look forward to building links with the newest members of our community.

Our core work remains our strongest focus – revegetation. We look forward to enhancing the sites into which we have already put so much time and effort. We will commence our planting events in April at the Ronald St area, completing the site commenced in October 2013. Our full calendar for 2014 will be available on our website www.foec.org.au or follow us on Facebook for handy reminder prompts.

See you on the creek.

David Pavone President, Friends of Edgars Creek.



The Coburg Hill site in the late 1950's, before the site was bought by Kodak. (Photo provided by Irene Baker, from Kodak Australia archives.)

The Coburg Hill development will forever change the interface of this site with the creek reserve. Friends of Edgars Creek will fight to maintain the character of our creek in North Coburg and to engage the area's newest residents with the creek and natural environment.

Tackling Common (Indian) Mynas

Jamie McGlade, of the Yarra Indian Myna Action Group (YIMAG), presented an informative session to the Friends on 10 November.

Common or Indian Mynas were introduced to Melbourne in the 1850s, for pest control in market gardens. They probably weren't very helpful in the gardens, and are now the main bird pest in Yarra Valley vineyards! They liked conditions in eastern Australia and are still expanding their range, following roads and settlement. Common Mynas are among the 100 'most invasive species' globally.

Mynas have significant impacts on native wildlife, as they compete for food and nest sites. They drive out birds such as Eastern Rosellas and Red-rumped Parrots, as well as Sugar Gliders, bats and possibly lizards from scarce tree hollow nest sites. Mynas also cause a nuisance when they nest in roof spaces, eat chook food and foul public

outdoor areas.

Jamie noted the differences between the Common Myna and the native Noisy Miner, which is unrelated but also very

aggressive and causing major impacts on other native birds in eastern Australia. The former has a chocolate-brown body and black head, while the Noisy Miner is mostly grey. Both can be seen along the Merri.

FoMC encourages the humane trapping of Common Mynas, and you can borrow one from the FoMC Secretary, Ray Radford, phone 0422 989 166 or email rafrara@yahoo.com.au – first come, first served.

The trap should be placed in an open grassy area. The easiest bait to use is dry pelleted dog or cat food. The first hour of daylight is when Mynas are most likely to be caught. Jamie said that you are likely to catch a lot initially, then the numbers drop off as the wary ones avoid the trap. A few other species might enter the first chamber of the trap and can be released from there, but only Common Mynas get up into the second chamber, where food and water is provided. The approved, humane methods of killing the birds are cervical dislocation (wringing the neck), or gassing. A member of the audience explained that placing a cardboard box over the second trap chamber immediately calms the bird/s. A flexible hose from a vehicle exhaust (cold, petrol engine) can be inserted into a hole in the box. Exhaust gases kill the bird/s within 40 seconds.

More information is available from the YIMAG website, www.yimag.org.au.

Ann McGregor Organiser of the Myna talk

The Indian Myna an Introduced Pest



February

EVENTS

April

Saturday 1 MECCARG* Event

Meet at the Merri path south of Murray Rd bridge Coburg, 1-3pm. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone Mel 0404 043 010.

Sunday 2 Litter Clean Up Coburg

Bell St Coburg, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 A1. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 2 Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 9 1 of 5 woody weed control Block B Bababi Marning

The first of five days to rid block B of Broom, Gorse and Briar Rose bushes. Light refreshments provided. Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands). Meet at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit (Road Runner factory), in between Transit Drive and Connection Drive Campbellfield, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 180 K12 - park on the factory side and check the No Parking signs. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

Sunday 16 1st Bird Survey for 2014

9 sites along the Merri. See page 6 for details.

Sunday 23 1st Bird survey for 2014 at Bababi Marning,

See page 6 for details.

March

Saturday 1 MECCARG* Event

Meet at the Merri path south of Murray Rd bridge Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone Mel 0404 043 010.

Sunday 2 Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 2 Sydney Road Street Party

Sydney Road Brunswick, 12noon-7pm. Help staff the FoMC stall near Brunswick Town Hall - ring Ray on 0422 989 166.

Sunday 9 Litter Clean Up Ailken Creek Craigieburn

Near the railway line, enter from Hexham Court Craigieburn, 10am-12noon. Melway 387 B12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Saturday 15 Merri Park Sumner Loving Project Launch TBC†

Merri Park, Northcote, off Winifred St near Sumner Ave, 1.30-3.30pm. Melway 30 C8. Includes a Snake Awareness Presentation. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ben at MCMC 9380 8199.

Saturday 22 Sumner Loving Weedmat Removal TBC†

Merri Park, Northcote, off Winifred St near Sumner Ave, 1.30-3.30pm. Help natural revegetation by removing weedmat, which we haven't done for years now. Melway 30 C8. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ben at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 30 2 of 5 woody weed control Block B Bababi Marning

The second of five days to rid block B of Broom, Gorse and Briar Rose bushes. Light refreshments provided. Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands). Meet at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit (Road Runner factory), in between Transit Drive and Connection Drive Campbellfield, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 180 K12 - park on the factory side and check the No Parking signs. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

*MECCARG = Merri & Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group

Saturday 5 MECCARG* Event

Meet at the Merri path south of Murray Rd bridge Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone Mel 0404 043 010.

Sunday 6 Litter Clean Up Reservoir

Central Creek near Davidson St Reservoir, 10am-12noon. Melway 8 B12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 6 Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 13 Weeding at Strettle Wetland

Friends of Merri Creek site near Strettle Wetland Thornbury, 10am-1 pm. Melway 30 B3. Help look after the site managed by the Friends with the support of the Darebin Bush Crew. Light refreshments afterwards. Phone Suzi 0403 595 466.

Sunday 27 Friends of Edgars Creek Planting

Planting extension at the concrete channel Ronald St North Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A9. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

May

Saturday 3 MECCARG* Event

Meet at the Merri path south of Murray Rd bridge Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone Mel 0404 043 010.

Saturday 3 Sumner Loving Weed Workshop TBC†

Merri Park, Northcote, off Winifred St near Sumner Ave, 1.30-3.30pm. Help rejuvenate Merri Park. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ben at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 4 Litter Clean Up Northcote

Zoe Circuit Northcote, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 B7. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 4 Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 11 Mother's Day Planting & BBQ

Jukes Rd Fawkner, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 18 A2. Bring your mum along and do your bit for Mother Earth by planting trees, shrubs and grasses to reconnect habitat along the creek. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ben at MCMC 9380 8199.

†TBC = To Be Confirmed



Murnong harvested by MECCARG at the group's unique Murnong Gathering festival on 9 November 2013 (see piece in Merri Musings).



Friends of Merri Creek Inc.

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