

What makes us upset over offsets

Offsets are a mechanism by which environmental damage inflicted in one place is in some way remedied or its effects are 'offset' by taking actions to improve the environment in another location.

All around the world, offsetting is becoming very popular with governments for everything from carbon use to impacts on flora and fauna from development. It seems that 'offsets' are a way that governments can actually allow things that are bad for the environment to happen, but to extract something positive from the process.

In particular, in Victoria our clearing laws or the Native Vegetation Management Framework (DNRE 2002) uses a system whereby when someone is allowed to clear, they then provide an offset that aims to compensate for the damage done, theoretically leading to 'no net loss' in the extent and quality of native vegetation. However, most of the 'gains' that are attributed to the offset are mainly only seen on paper and there is rarely any monitoring of offset sites to prove that they are being delivered.

By far the most common type of offset is where someone clears a patch of native vegetation or a number of trees and they then find another patch or amount of trees from a similar vegetation type in a similar landscape (in accordance with the 'like for like' rule). They must ensure that their offset area will be recognized as an area for conservation and managed for this into the future. This is usually done by adding a covenant to the title (for which it receives points – security gain). There is also usually a requirement to manage weeds and pest animals on the site for 10 years and then to maintain the site at the 10 year level (more points – improvement gain). But the offset site can also be assigned points for essentially doing nothing different at all. The offset can receive points for 'maintenance gain,' which is simply where the land manager is not letting the site go backwards in quality, and 'prior management gain' is assigned to sites that essentially have not been actively cleared.

Offsets are supposed to be used as a 'last resort'. The Framework prescribes that a 'mitigation hierarchy' be applied whereby someone who would like to clear should firstly try to look at measures for avoiding clearing; secondly they should minimise the clearing, and finally as a last resort, they offset any unavoidable clearing that needs to occur.

The Framework is currently under review by the State Government and the proposed changes show that the Framework is on course to be significantly weakened, whereby:

- The requirement to avoid and minimise will largely be gone and the focus is to be on offsetting for the vast majority of people who want to clear.

- The current requirement for a site visit by a qualified botanist will be removed for the majority of sites and a mapped and modelled dataset (Natureprint) will be relied upon for decision making instead.
- The process to obtain offsets will be significantly streamlined where essentially it will be a 'fee for clearing' process for the majority of people who want to clear.



Chocolate Lily in the upper Merri. Photo by Allie Dawe

Why this is concerning

Although it is quite hard to measure, all reports show that despite the fact that the Framework aims to see a **net gain** in the cover and quality of native vegetation across the State, we are actually going backwards, possibly to the tune of thousands of hectares per year and with dire consequences. We have seen that some species, even common birds, are experiencing sharp declines in population due to fragmented habitat combined with extended periods of drought. In fact ecologists suggest that landscapes require between 10-30% of native vegetation to maintain natural function. When this is combined with the challenges that our bushland, grasslands and wetlands and other natural places are already facing in the face of climate change, it is clear that a policy that is allowing our habitat to diminish needs strengthening not weakening.

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Merri Musings

Brunswick Terminal Station (BTS) update: A community rally 'Reclaim the Site' was held on February 17 outside the BTS, attended by about 300 people, with strong support from local MPs and councillors. This was the



first anniversary of the unilateral rezoning of the Terminal Station site from 'Residential' (with an environmental overlay) to 'Special Use' by the State Minister of Planning Matthew Guy. FoMC President David Redfearn spoke at the meeting and it appeared on the ABC TV news (with the wrong name attributed). The group is asking for an independent assessment of the process.

Another successful grant: FoMC has received \$20,000 from Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority for the project: *Restore Dianellas in the Shrubland* to control *Nasella* and woody weeds, then restore *Dianella* working from remnant vegetation.

Shock resignation from MCMC: Long term representative to the Merri Creek Management Committee, Paul Prentice, shocked its members by tendering his resignation at the meeting on 21 February. He had been a FoMC Representative or Substitute for exactly 19 years and Vice-President since 2004; and before that, involved in the pioneering Merri Creek Coordinating Committee.

He considered that he had no option but to quit after a second failure to persuade the Management Committee to join the organisation Sustainable Population Australia. (*Paul now wants FoMC to join – see page 6.*)

New FoMC Representative to MCMC: Thankfully, Nick Williams has agreed to fill the vacancy on MCMC created by Paul Prentice's resignation. Nick has been a FoMC Committee member for a year and just this year he became a Substitute Representative to MCMC. We're glad that he seized the opportunity to step up.

Entire Merri Creek walked: From Good Friday to 5 April, FoMC member and artist Rebecca Mayo walked all the way from the source of Merri Creek to its confluence with the Yarra River. There'll be more about her eight day walk in the next newsletter, but you can see her blog: <http://merricreekwalk.blogspot.com.au>

STOP PRESS: Marran Baba Management Plan due in May

Parks Victoria has finally announced that this Plan for the management of the Merri Creek Parklands north of the Western Ring Rd will be available on their website: <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au> in May. FoMC has waited for over six years for this, so we look forward to seeing it at long last (although we know that most of our recommendations have unfortunately been ignored).

What makes us upset over offsets

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If we remove the requirement to avoid and minimise, people simply won't think of it, let alone try to do it (ever heard of a developer protecting bushland out of the good of their heart?). This will lead to more clearing occurring. Also if we make the offsetting process easier to access, again, it will lead to more clearing.

The removal of qualified ecologists from the process is also very concerning. They are essentially an important safeguard in an underfunded system. Not only do they identify flora and fauna on the ground including seasonal species such as orchids or habitat values such as hollows for Powerful Owls (something that cannot be achieved even with the best mapping), they also act as the negotiators for the Native Vegetation Framework, thus lessening the load for under-resourced local government staff.

Finally, the streamlined offsets process will allow people to pay 'over the counter' (for example at their local council) and their money will go towards a 'pooled offset' to protect

an area of high natural values. This is all well and good and could see some good places being protected, but what if your area is deemed not to have any areas of high natural values? For example with the expansion of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary, the majority of the grasslands of the upper Merri Creek Catchment are being cleared and the offset site for these will be in the Western Grasslands reserve which is located between Werribee and Melton!

Ultimately our State can't afford to allow a 'fee for clearing' offsetting focused policy to masquerade as our new 'native vegetation' policy. Nor a 'streamlined' process that is built for a cut back public service.

Yasmin Kelsall FoMC Committee member

Find out more at:

Environment Defender's Office: www.edovic.org.au

Victorian National Parks Association's native vegetation web page: <http://vnpa.org.au/page/nature-conservation/biodiversity/native-vegetation>

Birds along the Merri in late summer

Australian Spotted Crane was added to our Birdwatch species list during our February surveys. It was recorded at Edwardes Lake. This dark, hen-like waterbird with barred flanks and white undertail is uncommon. It lives in dense vegetation such as reedbeds around fresh and saltwater wetlands, especially in the Murray-Murrumbidgee region.

Another first for our surveys was an Echidna at Bababi Marning, which was burying its head into an ants' nest.

The weather was hot and humid, which did not encourage bird (or birding) activity. Species diversity and bird numbers were down at most sites, except where there was plenty of water: at Coburg Lake (40 species, est. 430 birds) and Edwardes Lake (35 species, est. 398 birds). A total of 73 species was recorded overall.

The most numerous species were Silver Gull, Eurasian Coot, Pacific Black Duck, Rainbow Lorikeet and Common Myna. Common Blackbird was the only species recorded at all 10 sites, while the Magpie-lark, Australian Magpie, Rainbow Lorikeet and Spotted (Turtle) Dove were each seen at 9 sites.

Of the Merri's spring-summer migrants, the cuckoos and Sacred Kingfisher were not seen, but three Reed-Warblers were recorded at Edwardes Lake.

A roosting Grey-headed Flying Fox near the Creek was a surprise for the East Brunswick-Northcote surveyors, but the highlight was a pair of Brown Goshawks. Flocks of European Goldfinch and Common Greenfinch at Galgi Ngarrk were probably feeding on thistle seeds, one of their favourite foods.

At Bababi Marning, there were Dark Purple Azure butterflies at mistletoe, apparently the second generation for the season as they are usually seen in November. An unwelcome sighting was a Fox in Strettle Wetland, Thornbury. Near Brunswick Velodrome, the surveyors were drawn by small



Australian Spotted Crane. Photo by Glenn Ehmke

birds' alarm calls to the revegetated creek bank. A rat, 4 metres up a Lightwood tree, was staring fixedly at the ground beneath. Perhaps the centre of attention was a snake in the dense shrubby understorey?

Ann McGregor Birdwatch co-ordinator

Get art flowing for the Merri

We are looking to run an event this year or early next year to engage with the wonderful artistic community that live and work within our area. We're looking for people to help plan a suitable project or event and then bring it to life. If you have skills in events management, publicity, creative pursuits, people management or simply feel enthusiastic about this idea, we'd love to hear from you. Contact Yasmin Kelsall on ykelsall@hotmail.com

Second Merri Birdwatch survey for 2013

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 now available for all participants

Surveys at the following nine sites are on 26 May & 1 September

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

Egan Reserve – Harding Street – Strettle Reserve – Normanby Avenue: Meet at bluestone steps at 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 path at rear of CERES, East Brunswick (Melway 30 B7).

Merri Park – Phillips Reserve: Meet at end of Victoria Street, East Brunswick, at 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 Rd 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 19 May & 8 September

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

Market Gardens on the Merri

Interviews with residents who lived near the Merri Creek prior to the 1970s have been conducted as part of FoMC's Merri Creek Oral History Project. One of the themes that emerged was the widespread distribution of market gardens along the Creek.

Joe Garita bought his market garden in Harding Street Coburg in 1945. He worked there until recently when CERES took over. He recalls where gardens were when he first came into the area.

"One was where Pipeworks is now. Another two were along Mahoneys Road, another one was just past Links Road on the side of the creek; it was 15-20 acres, it was there for a few years. Another one near the Coburg Lake, where the swimming pool is now. Then there was a poultry farm on the corner of Bell Street and Willow Street. Then there was me in Harding Street. Tate Reserve was another garden which we ran for a few years in the end. Before us it was Chinese. Then on Robinson and Capp Reserves, there were three little market gardens there. Then near the Normanby-Moreland Road, on the Northcote side there was another garden for a few years, but then when they straightened the Creek they had to go. It became Northcote Golf Course. Then of course comes CERES, then after CERES there was another little patch of land that was run by private people, that's all. Oh no, there was another one in Rennie Street."

Loris Macleod lived in Goodwin Street West Preston in the 1930s. She lived across the swing bridge from what became Joe Garita's market garden, but was then owned by Chinese. She recalls:

"We were near the swinging bridge, all round there where the Chinese gardens were. I don't know what's there today. My mother used to send us down there and they had the most wonderful goods, their food, their lettuces, tomatoes and cucumbers, all sorts of fruit. We would go down there and other children would say 'They will hurt you, they'll hurt you' but they were lovely down there."

Further down the Creek in Clifton Hill, Mick Graham has lived near Hall Reserve since 1930. He remembers a market just north of the Heidelberg Road Bridge.

"But around near the bridge, it was all Chinese market garden. It was pretty big. It went up to the Oldis Gardens. It started near where the Government houses are now near the foot bridge. It went back nearly up to the railway line I suppose."

I know they grew some very nice watermelons there. We used to go down there and knock them off.

He had it well guarded, the old bloke. We used to wait till he went into the market. Then we would go down there. He would come back from the market about nine o'clock, we'd get down there earlier. He took his vegetables to the Victorian Market to sell them. I can't quite remember when the market garden stopped. It must have been in the 60s or 70s I think. Then they put the Commission houses there."

Joe's early crops were peas, beans, tomatoes and cauliflowers. Later, as tastes changed with new migrants, he grew whatever was popular.

Bill Berry lived in Lewis Street Thornbury during the 1940s. He remembers going to the Chinese market garden which was along present day Anderson Road, north of the Normanby Avenue bridge.

"You would go down there on weekends, Sundays, and you could select your own lettuce. Mum would say 'Go down, here's three pence, and get a lettuce.' You would go round feeling the big hearts of the lettuce. But you know why they were so big? We'd been into the sheds, 'cause the Chinese never spoke to you, they always seemed to be so secretive

and quiet, I suppose they weren't unfriendly, but we never got friendly with them. But in their big shed, all around the side of this big shed were all these 44-gallon drums. And you know what they had in them? Human waste, that's what went on their veggies. That is what made them grow so well."

Market gardening was not an easy life. Joe Garita tells of how he *"always got up about half past three, because I was near people, you know, from the country, they came early, they would get there at twelve o'clock. They would leave home at eight or nine and get there at twelve o'clock and stay till the market opened at four o'clock. Oh yeah, it's not an easy life."*

Continued opposite



The market garden at Harding St Coburg, now owned by CERES, in March.

The joys of woody weed removal

Experience for yourself the satisfaction of removing a swathe of woody weeds to reveal the native grassland underneath. You too can help make a difference that, unlike planting, is immediately visible. You can even be part of our plan to clear the woody weeds from a whole block at Bababi Marning this year. Look for the woody weed removals in our calendar.

Photos show before and after removing Gorse at Bababi Marning on 10 February.



Market gardens on the Merri

Continued from page 4

And then there were the floods that were so common on the Merri. Joe had been on his garden for just six weeks when, on 25 May 1946, a huge downpour dumped two and a half inches of rain which flooded his garden. He says he was shocked.

Then there was the pollution. A year after the Coburg Pool was opened, Joe was also growing vegetables at the bottom of Grant Street, which is the next street up, and he had eggplants, tomatoes and chillies. All the things that the Italians in the area wanted, and unfortunately the chlorine got into the water. "They were using Creek water there, it got into the vegetables and ruined quite a few crops. We couldn't sell them, everything tasted like chlorine."

In the 1940s, there was little social interaction between the locals and the Chinese market gardeners. Bill Berry described how he "snuck into his sheds and had a look around. You wouldn't let him catch you because there were all rumours about that the Chinamen would cut your throat or you'd be garotted!!"

But Loris Macleod commented "I don't think other people regarded them very well, but my mother and father trusted them; because they were harmless."

John Jordan has lived a few metres from the Creek in Bakers Road North Coburg since 1940. A local Chinese market gardener delivered produce to them weekly.

"And down south of the Lake, the Chinese market gardens were all down along there. The old guy there had a horse and cart, and he used to go round to different people in Coburg selling his vegetables. His last effort, he used to go to my grandmother on Sydney Road, and when they moved up here, he came up here to them.

He used to come up here, and they would buy what they wanted off him. That was the end of his round. Then he would go out and get into the back of his cart, he'd get the bucket and come out to our front tap and he'd get a certain amount of water in the bucket, then back into the van he'd go and pull the back down. He'd be there for maybe an hour or a little bit longer. Then he'd turn round, the bucket would go up, and he would pour the water and everything down the gutter, put the bucket in, take the nose bag off the horse, and he'd sit in there and get the reins, put his head back and go to sleep. The horse would take him up to Sydney Road, do a left turn, take him down to Murray Road, down Murray Road and down into the market gardens. And there he'd stop. And there his wife would get him out. He was on the opium, he was an opium addict, been one from a little boy."

By the seventies all the market gardens other than Joe Garita's were gone.

Des & Ruth Shiel

Time is running out

Our efforts to protect the Merri valley are a microcosm of the worldwide struggle for Planet Earth, under attack by persons with no self-restraint or respect: only out for money and power, and heedless of the consequences that will affect everybody including themselves.

In the nineteenth century, a proper sewerage system replaced the misuse of the creek; in the twentieth, weeds (from grasses to trees), pollution and litter were dealt with, and a freeway was defeated; but from the present frenzied growth-driven invasion of our grasslands there'll be no comeback...

A BBC series has shown the amiable Bruce Parry visiting northern lands from Siberia to Norway to Greenland to Alaska, and seeing and hearing about the damage that overdevelopment and climate change are doing to the environment, and to the people who had long lived in harmony with its wonderful plants and animals.

There's the enormous tar sands project in Alberta, Canada, which has trashed the lands of the local "First Nation" folk, and their traditional existence, though they do of course get royalties and employment out of it: they would feel they'd been forced to sell their souls to the Devil, make themselves complicit in turning their wilderness paradise into a hell on earth.

A pipeline transporting oil from there to the Gulf will be allowed to cross the Ogallala aquifer, Nebraska's main reserve of groundwater: "We're running out of time for action... it locks in a dirtier source of energy for 50 years," complained Anthony Swift of the Natural Resources Defence Council.

Unlike the US, Australia has signed the Kyoto Protocol and introduced a carbon tax; yet in contempt of these actions, the Energy Minister's White Paper predicts massive domestic use and exports of fossil fuels for decades to come. Obviously it contains no references to our high per-capita CO₂ output, and only vague, brief ones to renewables and climate change.

The latter's effects run from bad to worst. Tropical diseases extending their range; rising sea levels as Greenland's and some of Antarctica's ice melts, engulfing low-lying islands and coastal areas; oceans becoming warmer, and more acidic from dissolved carbon dioxide, harming marine life; droughts and fires and floods and storms wiping out homes and towns and farms.

Most sinister of all is the thawing of the tundra, as temperatures rise faster in polar regions than anywhere else: for beneath it lies twice as much carbon from ancient forests as there is now in the atmosphere, and it is beginning to escape in the form of the greenhouse gases CO₂ and the even worse methane, leading to self-reinforcing global warming.

There is clearly only one way to turn the situation around – bring down CO₂ levels by ending the combustion of fossil carbon, and revegetating worldwide in order to absorb billions of tonnes of the gas from the air and the seas; large renewably-powered desalinators and pumps would be needed to provide enough water for these plantings. We've got to cool the planet, re-freeze the tundra and defuse its monstrous time-bomb: we can't do much about the methane, so CO₂ reduction is all the more urgent.

Should FoMC join Sustainable Population Australia?

At the next FoMC AGM in November, Paul Prentice wants to move that FoMC join Sustainable Population Australia (see website: www.population.org.au) on the basis that increase in numbers is the greatest cause of environmental destruction in the Merri valley and the rest of the world. He wants to hear members' views on this subject by phone (9489 5062), or in person at FoMC activities, or email FoMC at: merricreek@bigpond.com

Zero net carbon: sun and wind to provide almost all our energy, hydrogen and batteries to store their irregular production as needed and ensure electrical supply, and also to power land transport, apart from electric trains. Ships and planes would run on biofuels, which merely recycle carbon that's already there, and can be produced from algae in ponds on barren land, not competing with food crops. A bit of oil would still be used, but only for lubricants, plastics, fertilisers etc.



The tar sands project in Alberta, Canada has been dubbed "The Most Destructive Project on Earth." Photo : www.treehugger.com

Fossil fuels replaced with renewables – certainly not the dangerous uranium; "carbon capture and sequestration" by natural means; consumption of resources cut by a third, as we're now 50 per cent over environmental replacement capacity of things like timber and fish; most difficult and important of all, a gradual but inexorable decrease in population through strict birth control. Not much to ask, if we want to save our beautiful, complex planet from ruin; but based on the human race's record so far, one wouldn't be too hopeful.

Paul Prentice

Friends of Edgars Creek Focus



The Friends of Edgars Creek (FoEC) committee is new but old; we vacate the committee every year and elect again. We vacated, we re-elected, and all committee members remain in position.

Anita has flagged her pending departure for travelling and will stand down from the Treasurer role in 2014. Thank you to Anita for her many years in Treasury. Stephen, our Immediate Past President, also has plans for travel in 2013, so he will be missed at both a practical labour level and for his foresight, knowledge and strategic thinking.

FoEC's 2013 started with a walk and talk activity at the Ronald St footbridge. We had the Snakehandler on site providing a snake and reptile awareness session. Our first real taste of Autumn on the day; I for one really enjoyed the cold wind after so much March heat and a long, hot spring and summer! We have completed our first planting in April and continue to keep our fingers crossed for winter rains and a decent rainfall season into Spring.

We have seven more plantings into 2013 and we especially look forward to the Confluence Planting for World Environment Day on 2 June where we come together with



A reminder of what Edgars Creek can look like! This photo was taken near the caravan park in North Coburg after a big rain event in 2010

the Friends collective:

FoMerri Creek, FoCoburg Lake, Merri & Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group and Moreland City Council. This activity will be close to the basketball stadium/athletics track, with planting immediately at the bridge over the Edgars, along the Merri Creek, and at the actual confluence area of the two creeks.

Our 2013 calendar includes work at all of our main sites and includes protecting and enhancing remnant grasses and Lomandra at the Caravan

Park site. The remnant vegetation theme is continued for our "Christmas in September" which will be at the Ronald St footbridge area where we will be working to protect remnant wallaby grass under the red gums adjacent to the path. For our full calendar please see our events section on our website www.foec.org.au

I hope to see you on the creek!

David Pavone President Friends of Edgars Creek

Important areas at risk in the North

The expanded urban growth boundary will see the majority of the Merri Creek Catchment area developed within the next 60 years or so. The areas of paddocks and hills that you see as you whiz up the Hume to Wallan will be subsumed by housing and industrial areas just like we've seen in Craigieburn and Epping in past years.

FoMC has been participating in a process with the State and Federal Governments to try and protect some of the most important sites for flora and fauna. This process is nearing a close and although some areas have been protected (much of the Merri Creek corridor, but far too narrow in places) and some other areas are zoned as Rural Conservation Zone, there are some other important areas that are still at risk.

The Federal Government recently listed a new vegetation community *Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater)*

of the Temperate Lowland Plains, some of which occurs within the Merri Creek Catchment. A preliminary survey has been undertaken of some of these areas, but there is no guarantee that any of them will be protected.

One particular example of this is Camoora Swamp – an excellent instance of the Critically Endangered wetland community, located around 5 km south of Wallan next to the train line. This is a State significant biosite, and its recognition as a nationally threatened community would elevate it to Nationally significant, but at the moment it has no guarantee of protection. It is not on the official maps and therefore if it is cleared, its clearing will not necessarily even be offset.

FoMC has managed to identify areas that should be protected but the experts missed, like patches of wetland on the remainder of the Camoora property, and a grassland area adjacent to the Merri near Amaroo Road, Craigieburn.

The Federal Government is due to decide on the future of the upper Merri Creek shortly. It is important that they recognise all of the important areas within the catchment and provide them with adequate protection from development.

To find out more or become involved in our campaign work, contact us on: merriecreek@bigpond.com

Yasmin Kelsall FoMC Committee member



Developer's vision of the huge new suburb 'Lockerbie' to be built next to Kalkallo.

MAY

EVENTS

JULY

Saturday 4 MECCARG* Event - Coburg

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

Sunday 5 Woody Weed Removal, Litter Clean-up, & Planting

Malcolm St Kalkallo, next to the cemetery, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 367 F2. Remove Gorse to aid access and plant Hedge Wattles to replace habitat. Funded by Port Phillip & Westernport CMA. Phone Ben at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 5 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 12 Mother's Day Planting & BBQ

Imaroo St Fawkner, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 17 K6. Bring your mum along and do your bit for Mother Earth by planting trees, shrubs and two patches of Dianella amoena along the escarpment to contribute to a "Dianella pollination corridor." Funded by Port Phillip & Westernport CMA. Phone Ben at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 19 2nd Merri Ck Bird Survey for 2013 at Bababi Marning

8.45-10.30am. Meet near the Istrian Club, Cooper St, Campbellfield (Melway 180 K10).

Sunday 19 Friends of Edgars Creek Planting

Meet at the Silurian Cliff site - access via Ronald St and head north past the bridge, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A8. Escarpment restoration north of the Silurian Cliff site. Funded by a Melbourne Water Community Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Sunday 26 2nd Merri Creek Bird Survey for 2013

At nine sites along the Merri. See page 3 for details.

JUNE

Saturday 1 MECCARG* Event - Coburg

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 World Environment Day Planting, Litter Clean-up & BBQ

Meet at the Edgars and Merri Creek confluence (basketball stadium), North Coburg, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 18 A10. A combined event, celebrating World Environment Day, with Moreland City Council and our other local Friends groups. Funded by Moreland City Council. Phone Lori Arthur at Moreland on 8311 4386.

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 16 Planting & BBQ - Galada Tamboore

Hatty Court Campbellfield, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 7 K6. Help plant to buffer the remnant escarpment at Galada Tamboore. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ben at MCMC on 9380 8199.

Sunday 16 Friends of Edgars Creek Planting

Meet behind the Big 4 Caravan Park (end of Elizabeth St), North Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 B-C7. Stream bank restoration above the creek escarpment. Funded by a Melbourne Water Community Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Sunday 23 Woody Weed Removal at Galgi Ngarrk

North entrance - from Craigieburn East Rd, 10am -12.30pm. Melway 387 F10. See map link <http://goo.gl/maps/mKs81> or join a car pool outside the MCMC office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, leaving at 9.15am. Help restore remnant Creekline Tussock Grassland, Escarpment and Streambank Shrubland. Light refreshments provided. Funded by Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program. Contact Ben at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 30 Community Planting & BBQ - East Brunswick

Help plant around the new underpass at Blyth St East Brunswick, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 30 B7. Funded by Moreland City Council. Phone Lori Arthur at Moreland on 8311 4386.

Saturday 6 MECCARG* Event - Coburg

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

Sunday 7 Litter Clean Up - Northcote

On the creek near Winifred St & Auburn Ave Northcote, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 C8. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 7 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 14 Merri Park Wetland Weeding

Merri Park Wetland, near cnr of Sumner Ave & Winifred St Northcote, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 30 C8. Funded by Darebin City Council. Light refreshments provided. Phone Ben at MCMC on 9380 8199.

Sunday 21 Strettle Wetland Planting

Friends' 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 21 Friends of Edgars Creek Planting

Meet behind the Big 4 Caravan Park (end of Elizabeth St), North Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 B-C7. Caravan Park site remnant vegetation protection and enhancement. Funded by Communities for Nature Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Sunday 28 Yarra Council National Tree Day Planting

Yarra Bend Park, along the north side of the Eastern Freeway near the shared trail. Enter from Roseneath St Clifton Hill and cross the footbridge, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 2D C4. Funded by Yarra City Council. Phone Ben at MCMC 9380 8199.

AUGUST

Saturday 3 MECCARG* Event - Coburg

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

Sunday 4 Litter Clean Up - Reservoir

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



Friends of Merri Creek Inc.

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Members' contributions are most welcome; please send to admin@mcmc.org.au by Friday 21 June 2013

*MECCARG = Merri & Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group