

MERRI GROWLER

The Friends of Merri Creek Newsletter

May–July 2014

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

Restoring nature in Northcote

Friends of Merri Creek has received two grants for an exciting program of revegetation works in Northcote.

Sumner Loving



This is a substantial two year grant of \$159,597 from Communities for Nature to engage the local community in weeding, planting and environmental education at Merri Park.

The *Sumner Loving* project aims to restore the habitat and water filtering function of a stormwater wetland and the surrounding Merri Park parklands near Sumner Avenue Northcote.

*Sumner Loving it's here at last
Building on the work from the past
We can all help – yes you and me
Lots to do as you can see:*

The project launched with an Indigenous ceremony, historical walks, and a reptile display on Saturday 15 March; then on the following week we also removed heaps of plastic weedmat. There's a diverse range of events coming up, including frog walks, wetland monitoring, litter collections, weeding workshops, and community plantings.

Wurundjeri Elder, Bill Nicholson, gave a wonderful Welcome to Country at the Sumner Loving launch on 15 March.



Upcoming events: *Sumner Loving* events are in the vicinity of Sumner Ave & Winifred St, (Melway 30 C8/9 – follow the flags) and they are all on Saturdays from 1.30–3.30pm. There are weed workshops on 3 May and 16 August, and plantings on 24 May and 28 June; plus there are later events too. But wait, there's more! There'll be another planting with a BBQ on 19 July 10am–12.30pm, near the children's playground, that is funded by Darebin City Council. For more details, see the back page and the FoMC website: www.friendsofmerriecreek.org.au under *What's On*.

Gorge-ous Views



The other grant, which was also mentioned in the February newsletter, is \$19,997 from the Melbourne Water River Health Incentives program for restoring native vegetation at the striking Northcote Gorge. This volcanic escarpment on the east bank of Merri Creek north of Heidelberg Rd Northcote, still retains some of its original vegetation.

The project, *Gorge-ous Views! Restoring the Merri Creek Habitat Corridor*, involves controlling serious environmental weeds, then planting trees, shrubs, and dense ground-storey plants. Everyone is invited to the community planting and BBQ on 15 June – enter from East St off Westgarth St Northcote, 10am–12.30pm (Melway 30 G 11).

This will hopefully be just the first stage in the eventual conversion of the largest block of exotic weeds remaining in the area between Heidelberg Rd and High St. As this is a narrow stretch of creek corridor, it is vital to improve its habitat quality, in order increase its value as a wildlife passage.

Inside

<i>Merri Musings · Westgate Park tour</i>	2
<i>Birds along the Merri in late summer · Second birdwatch survey</i>	3
<i>Merri birdwatch data</i>	4
<i>2014 Merri Creek Environment Fund Appeal</i>	5
<i>Small victories · Melbourne Playback Theatre comes to FoMC</i>	6
<i>Friends of Edgars Creek focus · Dick's witticisms</i>	7
<i>Events calendar</i>	8

Merri Musings

Upper Merri developments: Conservationists trying to protect nature in the upper Merri have been dealt a very poor hand from a deck heavily stacked in favour of developers by the Victorian Government.

The Government led by releasing the Growth Corridor Plans before the Biodiversity Conservation Strategies (which is back-to-front planning), then followed up by adding in some so-called "Logical Inclusions" to the Urban Growth Boundary, without any clear environmental process at all.

They then trumped it by only proposing to protect 61 % of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland within the Urban Growth Boundary, instead of the 80 % that they had agreed with the Federal Government. These are the beautiful old River Red Gums that are such a feature of landscapes to Melbourne's north. Corridors for Growling Grass Frog habitat are still being whittled down. The Government then threw out the monitoring and evaluation plan and the independent auditor that they were supposed to have.

However, we conservationists still have a few cards up our sleeve! Along with other groups, such as the Wallan Environment Group and the VNPA, we are still working hard to save the remaining areas of high conservation value. After a brief meeting of some FoMC Committee members and a couple of interested guests on 26 March, one of our aces, Yasmin Kelsall, is reviewing priority sites, to focus on the key areas that we want to protect in order to make a decent biodiversity network in the upper Merri. We will take this map to politicians, Councils, and the Metropolitan Planning Authority to clearly show them the areas that need to be protected and the reasons for it. Stay tuned to see how we go.

Our Facebook page wants more friends

If you haven't already done so, check out our wonderful Facebook page, we're sure you'll 'like' it.

Just search for the Friends of Merri Creek page on Facebook, and click on 'Like' to get automatic updates to group activities and news.

Reminder – new website address

This is just a reminder that Friends of Merri Creek has a new website address:
www.friendsofmerricreek.org.au



Islamic Museum opens on Merri Creek: On Monday 3 March, Australia's very first Islamic museum opened alongside Merri Creek at 15A Anderson Rd Thornbury, and you can enter it from the shared path. The Islamic Museum of Australia has five permanent galleries and an excellent café (shown above, from the Merri shared path) run by the 2013 Masterchef finalist, Samira Elkhafir. It also has educational resources for schools, a large multifunction centre and theatrette and a host of international and local visiting exhibitions. It is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to promote harmony and a mutual understanding between cultures and faiths. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday from 10am – 4pm and Friday from 10am – 9pm.

See their website at: www.islamicmuseum.org.au

Visit to Friends of Westgate Park

Join us in a tour of Westgate Park and see Melbourne's famous pink lakes; learn how the Friends group manages an extensive number of volunteers, including events on weekdays; find out about their list of activities; and inspect their revegetation works over 20 years.

Sunday 25 May, 10am-12.30pm. Meet in the picnic/bbq area near the car park off Todd Road, Port Melbourne, Melway 56 F1. Light refreshments provided.

If you would like a lift, please contact Ray on 0422 989 166 before Friday 23 May.

Join the Impossible Mission Team: After amazingly clearing woody weeds from Block A at Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grassland), we are now attempting to do the same with Block B (which has recently been burnt by Parks Victoria). You too can be part of this Impossible Mission Team and enjoy the immediate rewards of liberating the grasslands. We've already held two of our five scheduled events this year, and the next one will be on Sunday 10 August at 10am.

Birds along the Merri in late summer

Persistent light rain during our surveys on 16 February put a dampener on the participants as well as the birds, which were trying to keep under cover.

Bird diversity is generally lower in February surveys anyway, according to Sue Bryceson's analyses (*see article in this issue*). Nevertheless, the nine surveys on 16 February and one on 23 February recorded a total of 71 species. This is comparable with the total of 73 species for February 2013.

The most common bird was Pacific Black Duck, which was recorded at every site. Second most common was Eurasian Coot, most of them being seen at Edwardes Lake (est. 105).

Noteworthy sightings included ten Brown Quail at Bababi Djinanang in Fawkner. The Australian Spotted Crake was recorded in February 2013 and 2014 at Edwardes Lake, but otherwise has not been recorded in our surveys. Single Brown Goshawks were recorded at five sites. The migratory Australian Reed-Warblers were still present at Galgi Ngarrk and Coburg Lake. A single Common Bronzewing was seen near CERES in East Brunswick, flying towards Merri Park; one of the survey participants has seen this species several times in the CERES grounds. On the same survey, it was rather unusual to see two Brush-tailed Possums sitting out on exposed branches of two widely-separated trees – were they actually enjoying the rain?

Sites with the highest number of birds were, as usual, Coburg (295) and Edwardes Lakes (283). Galgi Ngarrk was not far behind with 248, boosted by a flock of about 70 European Goldfinches.

Most diverse sites were Galgi Ngarrk with 31 species, Coburg Lake (30 species) and East Brunswick–Northcote (30 species).

Eastern Grey Kangaroos were reported at three sites, and Swamp Wallabies at two sites. Single foxes were seen at Bababi Marning and Galgi Ngarrk.

All-round naturalist Brian Bainbridge reported three butterfly species at Bababi Marning: Barred Skipper, Dark

Purple Azure and Meadow Argus. The Meadow Argus (*photo*) has brown wings with prominent blue eyespots surrounded by brown and orange rings. It is a common butterfly in the grasslands throughout the year and its caterpillars usually feed on *Plantago* including the very common introduced weed, Ribwort.



Meadow Argus butterfly (*Junonia villida*) as seen in the February Birdwatch at Bababi Marning. Photo: Brian Bainbridge.

Second 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 18 May and 31 August

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 25 May and 7 September

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

Merri BirdWatch data - scientifically valuable

Our bird surveys since November 2008 have amassed a significant body of data. Susanna Bryceson has analysed the data from 199 surveys as part of her Biological Sciences studies at La Trobe University. The analysis explored bird diversity along the Merri's rural to inner-urban corridor, relationship to habitat types and to rainfall, and aspects of seasonal migration. Here are some of her interesting findings.

Overall results: Over the five years of surveys, 117 species were recorded. The most commonly-recorded species are shown in Table 1. Of the 20 species recorded in more than half the surveys, six are exotic (non-native) species. The main families represented were honeyeaters; pardalotes and thornbills; ducks, geese and swans; parrots; eagles and kites; cockatoos; and cormorants. The average for all surveys was 27 species, with a maximum of 40 species at Galgi Ngarrk in February 2011.

In terms of feeding guilds, 64% of species are insect-feeders, seed eaters comprise 25% including 16% that are also insectivorous, and 22% of species are aquatic feeding. Omnivores make up 15%, and carnivores 9%.

Species	No. of surveys (total 199)
Australian Magpie	194
Common Blackbird	180
Little Raven	178
Red Wattlebird	178
Spotted (Turtle) Dove	173
Common Myna	170
Magpie-lark	167
Pacific Black Duck	165
Rainbow Lorikeet	160

Table 1. Most commonly recorded species in the Merri bird surveys, 2008–2013.

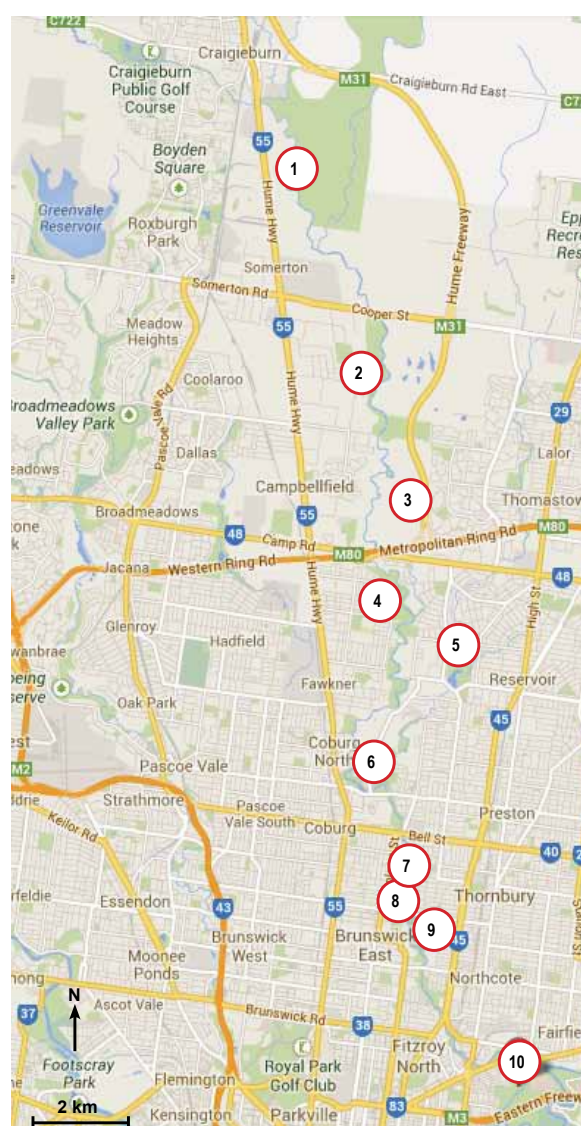
Changes from rural to inner urban: The FoMC ten survey sites extend from the rural-urban fringe in the north (Galgi Ngarrk near Craigieburn) to inner-urban Clifton Hill. A number of researchers elsewhere have reported a gradient of declining bird diversity from the rural edge to the central city, with exotic species increasing towards the city centre. Does this occur along the Merri? Well, no; the average species diversity shows no clear trend from urban fringe to inner urban sites. Indeed, the most diverse site is in East Brunswick (31.8 average species), and the Clifton Hill site scores slightly higher than the outer urban Bababi Marning. There is no consistent trend of increasing exotic species towards the inner city; in fact the inner areas recorded a lower proportion of exotic species (22.3%) compared with the outer areas (31.2%). On the other hand, carnivores (birds of prey) are mostly found in the remnant vegetation (outer) sites and are almost absent from the inner urban sites.

Habitat type: The ten survey sites can be classified into three main habitat types: remnant indigenous vegetation (mainly grassland), lake-wetlands, and sites revegetated with indigenous shrubs, trees and ground layer plants since the 1980s, along with areas of mown grass. Sue Bryceson found that bird diversity (i.e. the number of species present) varies with habitat type all along the Merri corridor. She concludes that vegetation type is probably more important than distance to the urban

fringe in determining which and how many species occur at any site. Revegetation sites had the highest species diversity. In the grassland sites, many species were only there at particular times of year, reflecting habitat fluctuations over the seasons. The shrub-tree plantings at revegetation sites provide more stable habitat. The range of ecological niches created in the revegetation sites may attract and concentrate a broad range of species that have few other local alternatives.

“That the proportion of exotic birds per survey falls across the 10 sites towards the inner city rather than the other way round...shows the great value of the revegetated Merri Creek landscapes for attracting and retaining native birds, particularly given that exotic bird dominance is expected to be high in the immediate surrounding urban matrix.”

Migration: On the assumption that seasonal and rainfall-related migration patterns are likely to be better revealed with species that occur sporadically, Sue analysed the occurrence of 38 species recorded in less than 20% of surveys, along with another four species.



- Bird survey sites**
- Site 1: Craigieburn Grasslands
 - Site 2: Cooper St Grasslands
 - Site 3: Galada Tamboore
 - Site 4: Jukes Rd Res
 - Site 5: Edwardes Lake
 - Site 6: Coburg Lake
 - Site 7: Egan Res/
Strettle Wetlands
 - Site 8: Blyth St to Moreland Rd
 - Site 9: Kirkdale St Park to
Merri Park
 - Site 10: Hall Reserve to
Yarra Bend Park



Rufous Night Heron

At least 24 of these 42 species are seasonal visitors, and some have strong associations with particular sites each year. *"A number of species appeared to strictly favour the grassland sites and have strong seasonal fluctuations. For example, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and Mistletoebirds appeared in May, robins were most*

abundant in May and August; and cuckoos favoured August and November. In November, White-necked Heron, Rufous Whistler, Rufous Songlark were usually recorded, but rarely at other times." In the revegetation sites, notable migrants were Striated Pardalote, Eastern Spinebill and currawongs over the cooler months. *"This survey shows that the urban area can be far more than an inhospitable bloc disrupting the habits of migrating birds. The Merri Creek corridor fragments the urban matrix and harbours patches of vegetation that can function as part of the greater regional migration patterns."* Studies elsewhere have found that pockets of riparian (riverside) vegetation in the urban area can serve as 'convenience store' stop-over sites for migrating native birds.

Rainfall: At least 16 species showed a response to rainfall patterns. A number of Australian birds congregate in inland Australia to breed when there are occasional floods (and hence leave the Merri), while conversely some species might use the Merri corridor as a drought refuge.

Conclusions: Sue notes that *"Researchers are increasingly acknowledging the value of 'citizen-collected' bird data and this has enabled analyses that, like this study, would otherwise have been too expensive to fund as formal research projects... The duration and extent of the Merri Creek corridor bird surveys has created a valuable scientific resource..."* She concludes that *"For community groups to record 30 species at a site in 90 minutes is surprisingly high given the surrounding urban matrix, and is comparable to numbers attained in healthy natural areas"* (according to the Professor of Life Sciences at La Trobe University). *"This study results suggest that bird migration patterns can penetrate and persist across urban areas given suitable habitat, and that the Merri Creek corridor forms part of the broader network of habitats beyond the cities – a substantial achievement of sustained community effort."*

Summarised by Ann McGregor from a report by Susanna Bryceson

2014 Merri Creek Environment Fund Appeal

Before the end of the financial year, why not make a tax deductible donation to help Merri Creek?

From a drain to a habitat corridor

Thirty years ago Merri Creek was little more than a drain, infested with weeds, lacking native vegetation and difficult if not impossible to access. Restoration of Merri Creek has been driven by the community's vision and involvement. Indigenous plants have been used to link habitat along Merri Creek and its tributaries.

Wildlife is flourishing and the creek parklands are a haven enjoyed by many.

You can help by making a donation

There's still plenty of scope to improve and extend this wonderful corridor. Donations to the Merri Creek Environment Fund provide a long-term and independent source of grants to continue bringing Merri Creek back to life after 170 years of degradation. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

How to donate

You can donate online at:

<http://www.givenow.com.au/merriecreekmanagementcommittee>

or make cheques out to Merri Creek Environment Fund and send to MCMC, 2 Lee Street, East Brunswick, 3057. You can drop in a cash donation at the office, or contact MCMC on 9380 8199 or by email at admin@mcmc.org.au to arrange a direct deposit. Please also contact us if you or someone you know is interested in leaving a bequest to the Fund.

About the Fund

The Merri Creek Environment Fund is managed by Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) and overseen by three directors committed to the wider community. The chair is David Redfearn OAM, who is also the President of Friends of Merri Creek. The Fund reports to MCMC and to the Federal Department of the Environment.

The Merri Creek Environment Fund and MCMC are non-profit and committed to ethical investments.

Small victories

It takes how many people to properly care for a wonderful thing like our own Merri Creek? Several hundred, you'd think, whose achievement has been across forty-odd years something fairly unique...

It began when the Sumner Estate (on a flood-plain!) endured inundation in '74: concrete lining was called for, which fired up the greenies, a much better outcome resolved to secure.

A levee and billabong to handle the surges, the Board of Works depot reborn as a park, the stormwater-filtering wetland created – the contrast with what might have been, pretty stark.

The Merri Creek Coordinating Committee was founded, to get the seven Councils all working as one; the Fawkner to Clifton Hill freeway they stymied, some feat for a group that had scarcely begun.

In '89 a visionary reorganisation established the Management Committee and Friends; the professionals are snugly ensconced beside CERES, and each on support from the other depends.

What's happened since then – well with planting and weeding, the rightful vegetation's reclaiming its ground; the birds, who put up with a quarterly census, and other forms of wildlife are hanging around.

There are talks and excursions and meetings and lobbying; the newsletter's more or less state of the art; the macroinvertebrates and water are monitored; frequent clean-ups keep riverbanks reasonably smart.

At Wallan and Craigieburn, Coburg and Northcote, Kalkallo, Fitzroy, others help with the task; Indigenous folk, central to the grand Murnong Harvests, accept us as colleagues – what more could one ask.

From Dights Falls to the Ring Road the pathway meanders, past parkland we gained and the Lake we adore; though we couldn't stop the bypass, we did shift it eastwards, to minimise the harm to Galada Tamboore.

Now, however, our remnant, irreplaceable grasslands are trashed by the legendary elephant in the room: the animal whose presence most people won't recognise – population's destructive, unsustainable boom.

On top of which, climate change rolls on relentless, fossil fuels being burnt at a frightening rate: despite efforts to bring in renewable energies, the biosphere's prospects are not looking great.

Still we'll keep up the fight for the Creek and the planet, human apathy and greed will not force us to quit: what a species is ours, with this beautiful dwelling, yet stupid enough to risk ruining it.

Paul Prentice



The footbridge to Merri Park Northcote, which commemorates the Merri Creek Coordinating Committee, the predecessor to the Merri Creek Management Committee.

Melbourne Playback Theatre comes to FoMC

FoMC has received a generous donation of \$940 from our new corporate member group, Melbourne Playback Theatre Company. The money will be directed towards our sub-group, Friends of Coburg Lake & Surrounds.

We welcome Melbourne Playback Theatre and take this opportunity to make our members and supporters more aware of this most interesting organisation:

Melbourne Playback is a leading not-for-profit interactive theatre company working throughout Victoria in the corporate, community and education sectors. For 30 years their team of skilled facilitators, actors and musicians have been inspiring and engaging audiences through performances, workshops and forums.

They present public performance seasons regularly at theatres throughout Melbourne and Victoria and there are public workshops and training in Playback Theatre throughout the year.

**You are invited to their next show: *Equilibrium*
Friday 16 May, & Saturday 17 May at 7pm
Tower Theatre, The Coopers Malthouse
113 Sturt Street, Southbank 3006**

In a world of constant flux, this is an evening to pause and reflect on audience stories dedicated to finding or not finding that perfect moment where competing influences balance and the universe as we know it is in order.

Tickets available at www.melbourneplayback.com.au

Training: Melbourne Playback Theatre is also employed by organisations for training, team-building, focusing and planning, reflection and celebration. Their next training days are on May 13, 14, and 15; book via their website.

Friends of Edgars Creek Focus



Welcome to the planting season! Friends of Edgars Creek (FoEC) has commenced our planting calendar for 2014 and there are many events scheduled for the remainder of the year (see the calendar at www.foec.org.au or on Facebook).

Since our last Merri Growler contribution we have had our AGM and the committee has been returned unchanged. However our current Treasurer (and so far the *only* one), Anita Morgan, will not continue in the role after this year. We welcome any interest in the position and hope we can find someone else to fill Anita's shoes. We hope she enjoys her planned travels!

We kicked off our year with another presentation on reptile awareness by *Snakehandler*. It was a pleasure to see many community members enjoying the presentation, learning about our native and indigenous reptiles and most importantly, actively engaged along the creek. For our April event we were active improving the creek bank around the concrete channel at Ronald St, and we have a further two funded projects to continue work in this area later this year and also for early 2015 (thank you Melbourne Water for ongoing support and also to Satterley who have provided support for projects across 2012–14).

FoEC has also been active in promoting our group and engaging the community with *our* waterway. We have successfully facilitated a linkage between Reservoir West Primary School and Merri Creek Management Committee which will see ongoing engagement of students with the natural environment; provided support to a grant application by St. Joseph the Worker Primary School, Reservoir and Greening Australia; hosted a tour for the Office of Living Victoria at the Gooseneck Meander site of officials inspecting sites in the northern catchment of the Yarra, and we were featured in a blog article in *The Guardian* focusing on Melbourne's community gardens "5 of the best" – we are proud to be in their top 5! (please see www.theguardian.com/culture/australia-culture-blog/2014/mar/06/community-gardens-melbourne).

We are greatly looking forward to the June event where we get together with Moreland City Council, Friends of Merri Creek, MECCARG and the Friends of Coburg Lake and Surrounds – a great celebration of the environment and the wonderful volunteers like us who make such

a splendid contribution to our environment and our communities.

Grant success:

Friends of Edgars Creek thank the Melbourne Water River Health Incentives program for two grants.

The first is \$1,100 for purchase of stationery and refreshments, maintenance of the website, photocopying of flyers, and provision of educational projects: this will assist FoEC immensely with administration and community awareness

The second is \$14,707.50 for the project *Edgars Creek Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) restoration, maintenance and enhancement* for works on the lower Edgars Creek, downstream of Edwardes Lake. This will extend areas of indigenous revegetation that FoEC have previously established.

I hope to see you on the creek!

David Pavone President, Friends of Edgars Creek



Friends of Edgars Creek at work at the Ronald Street footbridge area – a great day and a great group!

Dick's Witticisms

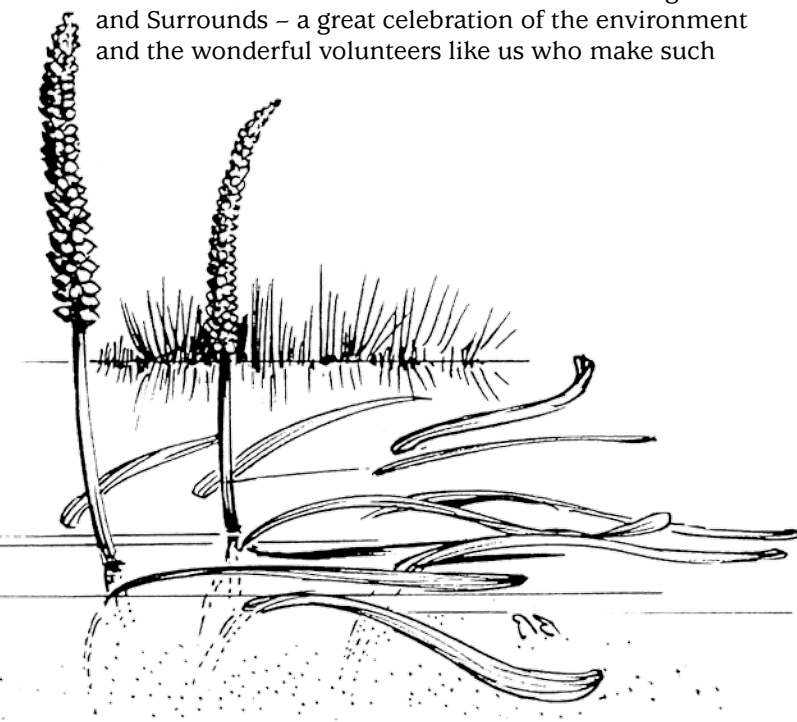
Some more witty one-liners from FoMC Life Member, Dick Harcourt:

The latest survey shows that 3 out of 4 people make up 75% of the world's population.

Shin: A device for finding furniture.

Minds are like parachutes – they only work when open.

The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% chance you'll get it wrong.



Saturday 3 MECCARG* Preparation for Planting

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

Saturday 3 Sumner Loving Weed Workshop

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, Sumner Ave near Traill St, 1.30-3.30pm. Melway 30 C8, follow the flags to help rejuvenate Merri Park. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ray or Monica 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.

Saturday 17 Friends of Coburg Lake & Surrounds Planting

Merri Creek near Carr St Coburg Nth, adjacent to the Scout Hall, 10am-12:30pm. Melway 17 J9. Funded by Moreland Council. Phone Emma 9355 7982.

Sunday 18 2nd Bird Survey for 2014

9 sites along the Merri. See page 3 for details.

Sunday 18 Friends of Edgars Creek Planting

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

Saturday 24 Sumner Loving Planting at Merri Park

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, Sumner Ave near Traill St, 1.30-3.30pm. Melway 30 C8, follow the flags and help beautify Merri Park. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 25 2nd Bird survey for 2014 at Bababi Marning

See page 3 for details.

Sunday 25 Visit to Friends of Westgate Park

Meet in the picnic/bbq area near the car park off Todd Road, Port Melbourne, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 56 F1. See page 2 for more details. If you would like a lift, please contact Ray on 0422 989 166 before Friday 23 May.

June

Sunday 1 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 our other local Friends groups and featuring a bird walk and talk. Funded by Moreland City Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 1 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.

Saturday 7 MECCARG* Planting indigenous species

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

Sunday 15 Northcote Gorge Planting & BBQ

Enter from East St off Westgarth St Northcote, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 30 G 11, follow the flags. Help restore the Merri Creek Habitat Corridor at this wonderful new site, with "gorge-ous" views! Funded by the Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 22 Planting & Woody Weed Removal at Kalkallo

Malcolm St Kalkallo, next to the cemetery, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 367 F2. Help restore critically endangered volcanic plains grassland, by re-establishing shrubs and continuing weed control. Light refreshments provided. Funded by Port Phillip & Westernport CMA. Contact Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Saturday 28 Sumner Loving Planting

Merri Park, Northcote, off Winifred St near Sumner Ave, 1.30-3.30pm. Melway 30 C8, follow the flags and upgrade Merri Park. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

EVENTS

Saturday 5 MECCARG* Planting indigenous species

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

Sunday 6 Litter Clean Up – North Fitzroy

Downstream from Rushall station Nth Fitzroy, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 D11. 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 Community Planting & BBQ – Reservoir

Ngarri-djarrang (Central Creek Grassland) Davidson St Reservoir, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 8 B12. Help protect Reservoir's critically endangered Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plains. Funded by Port Phillip & Westernport CMA. Phone Brian at MCMC 9380 8199.

Saturday 19 Community Planting & BBQ – Northcote

Merri Park Northcote, near the children's playground, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 30 C9. Funded by Darebin City Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Saturday 19 Friends of Coburg Lake & Surrounds Planting

Merri Creek Coburg Lake Reserve, Carr St, Coburg North, 10am-12:30pm. Melway 17 H10. Funded by Moreland Council. Phone Emma 9355 7982.

Sunday 20 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 a Melbourne Water Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

Sunday 27 Yarra City Council National Tree Day Planting & BBQ

Hardy Gallagher Reserve, cnr Lang & Garton Streets Carlton, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 29 H 11. Funded by Yarra City Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

August

Saturday 2 MECCARG* Planting indigenous species

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

Sunday 3 Planting & Litter Clean Up at Strettle Wetland

Friends of Merri Creek site near Strettle Wetland Thornbury, 10am-12.30 pm. Melway 30 B3. Help look after the site managed by the Friends with the support of the Darebin Bush Crew. Light refreshments afterwards. Contact Martin 0403 942 965.

Sunday 3 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 10 3rd of 5 woody weed control at Block B Bababi Marning

The third of five days to rid block B of Broom, Gorse and Briar Rose bushes. Light refreshments provided. 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

**Friends of Merri Creek Inc.**

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