

We wish to acknowledge The Wurundjeri People, the traditional custodians of our region, and all Aboriginal Elders, past and present.

News in Brief

Tall Trees & Tributaries

A guided walking art project through Federation Square and Birrarung Marr along the edge of the Yarra River. Be led from the beating heart of city life to the tranquillity of the Yarra Valley's forested mountains and waterways through installation, performance, song, music and storytelling. Flinders Street Amphitheatre, Federation Square. FREE EVENT

> **Sunday 19 April 4.30pm - 6.30pm**

Platypus of Diamond Creek

You are invited to attend a presentation by platypus biologist Josh Griffiths. Josh will discuss his experience working with platypus in Victoria and Tasmania, as well as the status of the platypus population in Diamond Creek. Please RSVP by 21st April to Tiana Preston, 0457 522 350 tiana.preston@melbournewater.com.au. Refreshments provided

> **Thursday 23 April 6.30 - 8pm Edendale Farm 30 Gastons Rd, Eltham**

Cranbourne Botanic Gardens Tour

The Victorian Friends Network is organising a one-day event a "behind-the-scenes" tour of the Cranbourne Gardens with special insights from the Horticulture Manager and talks by experts on wildlife from insects and bandicoots to birds and bats. There will be an interval in the cafe for lunch where participants can hear more about the wide range of activities carried out by the Gardens' Friends groups. Register with friendsvic@hotmail.com by April 27. Map and a more detailed program will be provided to registrants. Cost: \$10.00, meal not included.

> **Saturday May 02 10.00am - 5.00pm**

Nocturnal birds in urban landscapes

Nocturnal birds in urban landscapes presented by Marian Weaving. How has urbanisation affected reproductive behaviour, population, structure and spatial ecology of the Tawny Frogmouth? Come along and find out. Marian is a Deakin University PhD candidate and will present on her study of nocturnal birds, particularly her findings of the recent local studies of the charismatic and highly cryptic Tawny Frogmouth. Bookings: 9840 9124.

> **Wednesday 6 May 7.30pm Grand Hotel, Warrandyte**

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Last week we enjoyed a clear sky to observe the stunning lunar eclipse followed by the much needed rain – and then the most beautiful cumulus cloud formations over the yarra valley that I have ever witnessed. Our incredible beautiful earth, how very privileged we are to experience its wonders and motivate others with our passion!

WALK, WATCH and WONDER! – Myrtle Gully Track

An event to savour our local delights, led by our highly esteemed leaders Jane and Malcolm Calder. This walk will begin at the Tanglefoot carpark (on Sylvia Creek Road, 10 km from Myers Creek Road) at 11am and reach the remnant rainforest of Wirrawilla about 3pm. The track winds through Mountain Ash forests, mainly regrowth following the 1939 forest fires. There are many older giants in the gullies, some 200 years old. The walk is moderately difficult in parts where it descends into the rainforest gullies. It is an area of very high rainfall, and the track may be waterlogged during periods of heavy rain – so registrations are essential and please leave your contact details in case arrangements change.

We suggest that participants arrive early to enjoy your early BYO lunch at Tanglefoot; HEWI will provide tea and cake at Wirrawilla.

Wear suitable footwear, carry warm, waterproof clothing and water. BYO lunch.

HEWI will organise a car shuttle to return drivers to Tanglefoot for their cars. Bookings and more information contact Maureen: 5962 1224.

> **Saturday May 30 11.00am – 4.00pm**

FOREST UPDATE:

Autumn began with a spell of fine weather, perfect conditions for large-scale burns and DELWP responded accordingly. The fires that have produced so much smoke and haze in recent weeks are officially described as "Planned burns" and most people assume they are conducted to reduce fuel and increase community safety. In fact, 80% of the burns carried out in our region recently have been coupe regeneration burns ignited as part of VicForests' clearfell logging regime. The smoke produced has raised concerns for human and environmental health and has prompted demands for an inquiry from local grape growers. *So is DWELP funding VicForests coupe regeneration and how do such burns manage "bushfire risk" as set out in their Strategic bushfire management plan?* (flyer for the Fire Ecology Forum is attached separately).

Leadbeater's Possum Awareness Week has passed without the expected announcement of the species' uplisting to critically endangered. Greg Hunt now has until the end of April to make his decision, which will increase pressure on the state government to end logging in the possum's fragile Mountain Ash habitat.

The Regional Forest Agreements signed in the 1990s will soon be expiring and conservative politicians and industry lobbyists are calling for them to be "rolled over", locking in native forest logging in perpetuity. Prof. David Lindenmayer AO has published an essay in The Conversation (<http://theconversation.com/forestry-agreements-need-a-full-overhaul-not-just-a-tick-and-flick-39324>) explaining why this would be unacceptable. He concludes,

*RFAs are entrenching native forest logging as a loss-making enterprise that degrades important values such as water availability, carbon storage, wildlife conservation, and the **tourism value of forested areas** (<http://www.greatforestnationalpark.com.au>). They are not giving Australians a sound return on their publicly owned natural assets. The agreements are ideological, not logical. It's time for a rethink.*

GRACE BURN PROJECT Next Waterwatch monitoring:

physical and chemical tests on **April 24, 9.30-11am**
Invertebrate ID on **May 22, 11am -12noon, HL&LC**

April 16
HEWI meeting
HL&LC
7.00pm

April 17-19
 Fire Ecology Forum

April 19
 Tall Trees & Tributaries
 Fed. Square - 4.30-6.30pm

April 23
 Platypus of Diamond Creek
 Eltham - 6.30pm

April 24
 WaterWatch monitoring
 9.30-11am

May 02
 Botanical Gardens
 Cranbourne - 10am -5pm

May 06
 Nocturnal Birds
 Warrandyte - 7.30pm

May 10
 Trees for Mum
 Badger Creek
 9am -12noon

May 14
HEWI meeting
HL&LC
7pm

May 18 - June 18
Environment Display
Healesville Library

May 22
 Waterwatch
 Invertebrate ID
 HL&LC
 11am -12noon

May 30
Walk, Watch & Wonder
Toolangi forest
11am - 4pm

June 03
 "Frackman"
 The Memo, Healesville

News in Brief cont..

Trees for Mum

This is a Landcare initiative to "celebrate your Mum by planting a tree in her honour", sponsored by Mt Toolebewong and District Landcare. Meet at the corner of Bluegum Drive and Badger Creek Road for this planting along the Coranderrk Creek which runs through Healesville Sanctuary opposite. Registration at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/T4Mregistration>

> **Sunday May 10**
9.00am - 12noon

On the last day of term 1 our Waterwatch team had the pleasure of welcoming the two Year 4 classes from Healesville Primary School, with their teachers and parents, for another waterbug discovery activity. The students are always so eager and delighted to realise how their plantings in the previous year are helping to protect such a diversity of tiny creatures. They face a demanding worksheet on their return to class!

VICTORIAN BIODIVERSITY ATLAS

This was the presentation at the last Environment Forum; please contact Maureen if you would like a copy of the powerpoint pdf. The availability of this database raises the interesting question of whether these records will increase the vulnerability of native species to human contact and possible interference. Karen Garth, HEWI and MT&DL member, was excited by a report (1908) of a Helmeted Honeyeater in the vicinity of Queens Park and the Mountain Swamp Gum ecosystem, once the dominant feature of that area. Which raises yet another issue - could this mean that the closely associated Leadbeater's Possum, (as at Yellingbo) may also have thrived right here in Healesville?

The following paragraph also highlights the consequences of vegetation loss - but one that concerns human food supplies rather than those of wildlife.

APPETITE FOR CHANGE

'Global Warming Impacts on Food and Farming Regions in Australia'

This recent study by the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute (University of Melbourne) March 2015, compiled the likely impacts of a drying and warming climate on Australian food production across ten regions. The agricultural statistics were contributed by many specialists (in support of Earth Hour) to highlight our vital necessity to reduce greenhouse emissions which already threatens agricultural production across most of Australia.

Healesville lies within the cold, wet and temperate cool-season wet region which is forecast to experience reduced rainfall and higher temperatures leading to more frequent and intense droughts and bush fires with greater stress on water resources. However, most other productive zones will experience even greater impacts from climate change so many standard crops will have a restricted growth area in the near future (and even some within our own region).

With the increasing preference for our agricultural products in both local and overseas markets it is essential that all agricultural land in our zone be protected from further urban expansion and commercial development to maintain sufficient food supplies for these rising demands.

The survey included crops and animal husbandry - and the latter is already under review by Yarra Ranges Council for a proposed amendment to the planning scheme to allow intensive animal husbandry in Green Wedge zones. This proposal has been sent to the Victorian Planning Minister, and also to VCAT and the community will be invited to make submissions to a future Panel Hearing. These extremely complex decisions about the future of our agricultural productivity are complicated by the number of commercial developments being proposed on farm land, especially on the Lilydale side of the Healesville township.

Such conflicts are the direct result of allowing the excessive emission of greenhouse gases and the seemingly total lack of will to address even the most basic practices that would reduce the inexorable rise in temperature and associated unpredictable rainfall and fresh water availability.

To paraphrase Professor Lindenmayer: "it's time for a rethink" - and we all need to accept responsibility for making that essential difference to local planning issues.

FRACKMAN - coming to the Memo!

This documentary is the story of Dayne Pratzky's transformation from pig hunting bloke to fracktivist after Queensland Gas Company tried to sink a well on his property and told him there was nothing he could do about it. The film tracks his epic personal journey and hits at the heart of the fight that communities across the country are facing right now. HEWI is negotiating the rights to bring this marathon endeavour to Healesville. Save the date and alert your friends.

> **Wednesday June 3, the Memo, Healesville**

Thanks to Evelyn and Steve for contributions this month and also to Bron and Lou for managing our stall at autumnfest recently, including donations and new members. A warm HEWI welcome to Meredith, Laurence and BJ, we hope you will benefit from our activities and our advocacy interests..



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