

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

News in Brief

STOP PRESS:

Please save in your diary: On Friday June 1, HEWI will be presenting a new documentary, "The Plight of the Orange-bellied Parrot" at the Memo. Save this evening for a beautiful film – full details next month.

Leadbeater's Possum Rediscovery Day

A free family-friendly event, bring your picnic lunch, a blanket, chairs and walking shoes.

Eric Wilkinson, the individual who rediscovered the enigmatic possum way back on April 3rd, 1961 hopes to have a viewing version of his new manuscript available. There will be a walk through the Tall Trees, learning the ecology of the important wet sclerophyll forests of Victoria. Via Marysville, past Lake Mountain on to Cambarville. Contact Steve: 5062 9008

> **Sun April 08, Cambarville Road, Yarra Ranges National Park**

Solar Electricity Production & Storage

Facilitated by local experts and industry specialists, this session will provide information & understanding for community members about the complex area of community solar energy on roof tops for homes, community buildings and businesses, and how energy is stored and distributed.

> **Sat 28 April 10.30am – 12.30pm**
contact@healesvillecore.org.au

Mullum Mullum Festival

Celebrates the Aboriginal cultural heritage and environmental values of the Mullum Mullum Creek Valley with over twenty expert-lead walks and presentations. Opens 29th of April at Yarran Dheran Reserve with nature walks in Mandarin and Arabic, Aboriginal craft workshops and talking circle, music performances, displays and food. Eighteen experts including Dr David Karoly (Leader of the CSIRO National Environmental Science Programme Earth Systems and Climate Change Hub), Senior Botanist David Cameron, Platypus researcher Josh Griffiths, and Andrew Skeoch, one of Australia's best-known nature sound recordists.

Visit [festival website](#) or check out our Facebook page for further information

> **April 28-9, May 5-6 Yarran Dheran, Mitcham**

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Our fire-free summer has evolved into this beautiful autumn, ideal for walking! The Healesville U3A Garden Group invited a HEWI member to lead a walk along the Watts River and the participants expressed their gratitude to Karen with a spontaneous donation and interest in future walks and events that we are organising.

HEWI was also delighted to have been nominated by artist Dominika Keller, as her community group for the current "Community Spirit" Exhibition at the Memo gallery. Dom chose to paint some plants along the Grace Burn – indigenous (in colour) and weeds (in gray!). A very perceptive composition reflecting our Grace Burn Project in botanical artistry. (Open until April 17). This spontaneous sharing between community groups is mutually positive and most rewarding.

Council's partnership support (below) enables us to fulfill such opportunities within the wider community.

YARRA RANGES COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

"Plants, People and Place"

We are delighted and most grateful to have been entrusted with four-year funding for our community engagement activities, 2018 – 2022. The theme was adopted from a spontaneous comment at our AGM - a reflective summing up of the significant contribution by our volunteers over the preceding year of activities and advocacy.

This correspondent noted the unintentional priority of plants before people & used the phrase with wry irony. Unfortunately, we continually fail to recognise the natural environment as an essential component of our human existence. The new grant will allow our continuing facilitation of current projects with several new practical activities that will extend our range of participating age groups in completely new events. All these will be led by our highly talented and most appreciated facilitator, Karen Garth. There is a busy program ready to run in spring – watch this space!

MONITORING AND IDENTIFYING INVERTEBRATE POPULATIONS

Our Waterwatch team are contracted to Melbourne Water to record invertebrate populations from the Grace Burn twice a year autumn and spring. Comparative samples are collected from Wallace Parade and within Queens Park.

Last week the team led Year 3 and 4 students from Healesville Primary School on their own 'waterbugs discovery' exercise which began with Lou demonstrating the riffling technique. This net collects the tiniest critters that tend to bury themselves for safety in the creek bed. The students then moved to their trays of creek water, carefully preparing their holding containers for the tiny organisms that they isolated and identified from the charts provided. Our scientific researchers of the future!

Our own, slightly more sophisticated count, collates and records the data to be posted electronically. Members are always most welcome to join us.

"around the world, waterbugs are the most widely used bioindicator of environmental health and pollution of rivers, lakes and wetlands". Angus Webb, quantitative ecologist, [University of Melbourne](#)

> **April 10, 10am – 12noon Room 2 Healesville L. and L. Centre**

YELLINBO CONSERVATION PLAN 2014 - ??

This project was developed by the Victorian Environment Assessment Council, which provides "independent and strategic advice relating to the protection and sustainable management of Victoria's environment and natural resources". HEWI was involved with the in-depth consultations and submissions from which this Plan, with annual targets and reviews clearly defined, was adopted in 2014.

Enter a small group of forceful property owners unwilling to return the Crown land that they had been leasing; support for this very small group from our own Council; the current Minister's back flip on the Assessment guidelines; - and the whole project, carefully designed to provide essential waterway

APRIL

8 Leadbeater's Possum Rediscovery Day
Cambarville, YRNP

13 WaterWatch monitoring Grace Burn: Physical & chemical assays. Queens Park near Pool
9.30-10.30am

14 First Aid Training, YR Council
Monbulk Community Link 1/group

20 WaterWatch Invertebrate ID Room 2 HL&LC
10.00 am – 12noon

26 HEWI meeting HL&LC Rm1
7.00pm - 9.00pm

28 Solar Electricity Production & Storage Community HCoRE
Venue tba 10.30am – 12.30pm

29 Environment Community Forum
10.00am – 2.00pm (with lunch)
Mooroolbark

28-9 Mullum Mullum festival
opening day 29th

MAY

5-6 MM festival continues

2 Underground Lovers
7.30pm. Warrandyte

11 WaterWatch monitoring Grace Burn: Physical & chemical assays. Queens Park near Pool
9.30-10.30am

17 HEWI meeting HL&LC Rm 1
7.00pm – 9.00pm

28 Solar Energy for Landlords & Tenants
Income from Solar Production
HCoRE venue tba

****News in Brief cont..*****

Underground Lovers –
Exploring the clandestine relationships between trees and fungi
Presented by Dr Alison Pouliot
Attendance essential for field trip booking
River View Room, The Grand Hotel, Warrandyte
Time: Please arrive at 7.20pm for a 7.30pm start. Enquiries: 9840 9124

> *Wednesday May 2, 7.30pm*
Field Trip

> *Thursday May 3, 9.00am – 11.00 am*

corridors, was thrown into disarray. Which then involves even more time and energy from the original volunteer environmentalists – fortunately with new supporters who share our science-based principles.

HEWI gratefully acknowledges the Yarra Ranges Conservation Alliance, representing hundreds of volunteers, positive and practical conservationists of their local waterway and/or bushland, united in their advocacy for revegetated habitat corridors for many animal and bird species.

FORESTS UPDATE from the CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

On Tuesday, 27 March the Victorian and Commonwealth governments announced an extension of the Central Highlands Regional Forest Agreement to 31 March 2010. Ref: <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/certainty-for-workers-and-the-future-of-our-forests/>

Here is our response.

While HEWI is pleased to note the Andrews government's belated acknowledgement that the 20-year-old Regional Forest Agreements, "don't reflect modern forest science," we are extremely disappointed that Victoria's government has announced a two year extension to the Central Highlands RFA. The announcement offers no immediate relief from the destructive logging of our nearby forests. Instead it is aimed at providing certainty to the very logging operations which are destroying the habitat of our state's faunal emblem, as well as Greater Gliders and many other forest dependent species.

Another two years of rapacious logging in Ash forests can only push Leadbeater's Possum closer to extinction. If the government will not act to conserve the State's faunal emblem in accordance with the advice of the nation's top ecologists, what hope can there be for any of the other less celebrated threatened species whose homes are also destroyed by logging? VicForests has been operating as if it is exempt from federal environmental controls under the controversial RFA.

Why, after 20 years of the RFAs and almost 4 years in power, did the government leave it until the day the agreements expired to announce a further two years delay to improve management of Victoria's forests? The science is clear that Ash forests need urgent protection and the conservation community has been telling them this for years!

HEWI will be calling for reconsideration of the Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996 contract with Nippon Paper Industries' Maryvale mill, signed off under the Kennett government, which extends to 2030. Currently more than 90% of timber from our valuable Ash forests is going to woodchips, pulp and sawdust. This agreement, more than any other, is responsible for trashing our magnificent forests and the failure of forest management under the RFAs to protect sustainable jobs in sawn timber.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORUM

These networking forums have been popular in the past and this is the first one since recent changes have occurred within this section of Council. In preparation, Bushland staff have met with the Landcare facilitators and other community members for consensus on the most useful topics. There will be a range of speakers from within Council, and the opportunity to ask relevant questions about specific interests that you may have. These forums always allow time for the networks to discuss ideas and topics for the next event and also provide the opportunity to network with each other. Highly recommended! [Bookings essential](#) by **April 20.**

> **Sunday, April 29, 10am -2.00pm Tapscott Melb. Centre, 320 Cambridge Road, Mooroolbark**

FLORA EXPLORER (Download for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#))

Council has an exciting new phone and tablet application which is available now. Flora Explorer is the perfect tool for identifying plants in the field. While this app may be useful in many areas of Victoria, it specifically covers the native plants within the local government areas of Yarra Ranges Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, Knox City Council and the City of Casey combined. [Yarra Ranges website](#)

HEWI's first submission to the Healesville Structure Plan included a request for the continuation of the footpath along Don Road, Monda Ave to Badger Weir Rd, and along that road to the NP. This project was included with a High Priority action, but as with so many others, nothing happened. Now the more recent Badger Creek Community Committee have made a separate request and have gained our Councillor's interest – congratulations to them all, from locals and tourists alike.



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