

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

News in Brief

Scenes on the Yarra

This new creation will be presented on Herring Island in the middle of the Yarra River. Please make sure you book a ticket that includes the essential Water Taxi as the Island is only accessible by boat. www.scenesontheyarra.com
> 25 February, 6.30pm Herring Island

Environmental Volunteers Celebration Event 2015

"Yarra Ranges Council wish to invite you to the annual event for environmental volunteers as our way to thank and celebrate all the wonderful work that you do for the environment". Drinks & Canapés will be supplied. RSVP: www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/celebration
> March 01, 4.00 – 7.00pm, Burrinja Cultural Centre, Upwey Crn. Glenfern Rd & Matson Drive (car pool if possible).

Clean up Aus day

HEWI withdrew from this activity last year along with other groups protesting about the use of the McDonalds' logo on their protective clothing and the provision of vouchers. If any members wish to clean up an area, call Maureen for a large litter bag.

Seminar / Field Trip: Let's go 'batty,' presented by Rob Gratton

This evening seminar and field trip will focus on the mysterious micro bats that grace our evening skies and shy away from the day. Rob is an environmental scientist and educator with copious knowledge on these little bats. An approximately 1.5 hours session and subject to weather conditions, an outdoor inspection of a harp trap to follow. Rob has relevant approval and ethics certification for trapping and recording faunal data. Bring torches and feel free to wear fancy dress in celebration of Australasian Bat Appreciation Week.

> Wed. 4 March, 7.30pm Grand Hotel, Warrandyte

"How Gardeners Can Be Champions For Wildlife" (www.sgaonline.org.au)

SGA is holding a series of training forums to give ideas and practical advice on how to reconnect gardens with the surrounding environment. This one focuses on bringing indigenous animals back into the garden through building habitat.

> Saturday 7 March 1.00pm to 4.30pm Eltham, Edendale Community Environmental Farm

Our thanks to all those who have renewed their subscriptions. Bronwyn will send out electronic receipts where possible – when she returns from holidays. How fortunate to have avoided Code Red days this summer - and the recent rain has been such a delight! Our first Walk, Watch and Wonder will be in May when fungi, mosses and liverworts should be in their prime.

AUTUMNFEST

HEWI has supported this permaculture festival since its inception and we hope to have a stall again this year as our community contribution to the event. Unfortunately this date was received when members already had other commitments. So if you could assist us by offering one to two hours on our stall, please call Maureen.

> Saturday March 21 9am – 1.00pm Coronation Park

WATER BUGS DIVERSITY in the GRACE BURN

Once again our WaterWatch team will be joined by "eager beavers" from Year 4 Healesville Primary School for their own invertebrate identification activity. The students will search our creek samples from the Grace Burn for the lively waterbugs that are swimming about. They will select their tiny waterbug with a plastic spoon or small paint brush and tip it quickly into an iceblock tray cube of creek water. Then they search the identification charts for a match - the students' ability to accurately identify their 'catch' is always amazing.

We are delighted to be welcoming back the same students who planted along the Grace Burn last year. This fun activity also helps them to understand the value of their previous revegetation and the interdependency of flora and fauna habitats.

> Friday March 27, 9.00am – 12noon, Queens Park rotunda

WATERWATCH TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Merri Creek Management Committee is running a training day at The Darebin Creek Parklands on Saturday the 21st of March. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP Trevor Hausler: Trevor.Hausler@mcmc.org.au. The aim of the day is to train people in the Agreed Level Taxonomy method of macro invertebrate identification (don't worry, it's not as daunting as it sounds!). It will be an interesting day and a great opportunity to brush up on your bug identification skills or have a go for the first time!

HEWI would certainly welcome newcomers to our WW monitoring days. Next one:

> Friday February 29, Grace Burn near rotunda, Queens Park 10.00am

HELMETED HONEYEATERS on the move!

Dispersing helmeted honeyeaters have been found occupying a revegetation site in close vicinity to Yellingbo township. The last recorded observations of HeHos at this site were in the late 1970s. The birds are using plantings that range in age from 4 to 30 years old. Congratulations to the local community and the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Team for their sustained restoration effort over 30 years. This magnificent result will be augmented by a new grant under the 20 Million Trees Round One Projects through the Australian government to support remaining populations of the critically endangered Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Possum in this exceptional region.

FebruarySustainable Living Festival
Melbourne**February 25**Scenes on the Yarra
Herring Island**February 29**

WW monitoring

March 01Enviro Vol Celebration
Burrinja, Upwey**March 01**

Clean Up Aus Day

March 02World Wildlife Day
4.00pm - 7.00pm**March 04**Bat Appreciation Week
Warrandyte**March 6-9**Yarra Glen Art Show
Memorial Hall**March 07**Gardens for Wildlife
Eltham**March 21****International Day of Forests****March 21****Autumnfest****March 22**Ectopia Junction Festival
10.00am - 4.00pm**March 27**Waterbugs with HPS
Grace Burn**March 28****Earth Hour**
earthhour@act.wwf.org.au**April 01 - April 07****Leadbeater's Possum Awareness Week**

Both species will also be the target for a similar grant that will revegetate 8 ha of floodplain forest in the Coranderrk Bushland Reserve adjoining Healesville Sanctuary to permit releases of captive-bred Helmeted Honeyeaters and lowland Leadbeater's Possums.

CHRISTMAS HILLS LANDCARE GROUP

Congratulations to this hardy group of volunteers who were also successful in obtaining a 'Caring for Country' grant for 4ha of remnant vegetation, further improving the quality of a critical habitat corridor that links Kinglake NP to Warrandyte SP through Christmas Hills.

WEED MANAGEMENT, WILDLIFE RECOVERY AND BUSHFIRE FUEL REDUCTION IN THE DANDENONGS

Following the successful application for their \$450,000 project over the next 3 years to help control the environmental weed Wandering Trad in the Dandenong Ranges by our friends from the Community Weed Alliance of the Dandenongs (CWAD), another major community grants program will be opened in the near future with funding from the National Landcare program. This will be augmented by a further \$2,000,000 (!) through the Victorian Government, giving various groups and organisations in the Dandenong Ranges community the opportunity for funds to undertake great local wildlife, weed management and fuel reduction projects. At last the environmental degradation of the Dandenongs is being addressed by the sheer determination and persistence of volunteer residents. *(Unfortunately the recent launch was cancelled due to rain!!)*

NORTHERN YARRA LANDCARE NETWORK

Our landcare groups in this region have been without a facilitator since the end of 2014 and although the previous facilitator, Rob Fallon, was able to organise a succession of projects into 2015, it will be vital for a new facilitation position to be funded in the next round of appointments due July this year. These alliances of local groups are essential if we wish to attract the funding required to tackle our environmental problems in a cohesive and sustainable way and work with authorities such as Vic Roads and VicTrack on projects in our region.

GREEN WEDGES & CLAUSE 53

At the last Council meeting, February 10, it was resolved to seek authorisation from the Planning Minister to prepare and exhibit an amendment to remove the current prohibition on intensive animal husbandry in Green Wedge zones 1, 2 and 3. (Only Councillors McAllister and Cox voted against this motion). If this is granted by the State government, there will be a public consultation process and a planning panel. Although the affected areas are mainly outside our region, this further diminution of Clause 53 provisions would be strongly opposed by HEWI. If you are interested in the definitions of intensive husbandry, Item 7.2 from this Council agenda gives a reasonably comprehensive explanation.

<http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Lists/Minutes-Agendas/Council-meeting-10-February-2015?agenda>

FIRE ECOLOGY FORUM

Advance notice for this coming event – organised by DEPI but with speakers chosen by the community to allow for open and non-biased discussions of best practices. We thank Glenn Brooks-McMillan, facilitator for the Southern Ranges Environment Alliance for these successful negotiations with DEPI. This forum promises to be stimulating, most informative and practical with the groundwork laid for further consultation and refinement of fuel reduction practices.

> **17, 18, & 19 April**

We are most grateful to Jane and Malcolm Calder who will lead our walk of discovery in May. They will also join Kaye McCrae for an orchid walk that HEWI will offer in early October. Your committee have written to Minister Neville re the Native Vegetation Management Framework and we have been reassured that the Healesville offsets site is fully protected by a Trust for Nature covenant.



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