



HEALESVILLE * CHUMCREEK * YARRAGLEN * BADGERCREEK * STEELSCREEK * TARRAWARRA * TOOLANGI

We wish to

acknowledge *The Wurundjeri People, the traditional custodians of our region, and all*

News in Brief

Learning for Sustainability Conference

This Sustainability Conference is a great opportunity to connect with like-minded people, hear from experts in the field, gain ideas to take back to your school, early learning centre or wider community, all while enjoying local food in a beautiful setting.

>Friday 28 February 8.30am to 3.30pm

Box Hill Institute, Lilydale lakeside

Tickets on Sale Now ([link](#))

Casey Volunteer Grants

HEWI has submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) for administration assistance - new electronic equipment and travelling allowance for our committee members.

We are hoping that if we are successful, someone will be willing to become our new secretary at our next AGM!

Healesville Community for Renewable Energy

HEWI has supported HCoRE's grant application to Sustainability Vic. for a large grant to cover their increasing need for professional administration towards achieving an Emission Free Healesville by 2027. A dedicated commitment indeed!

Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation

Congratulations to all those involved in this exciting new stage for HICSA – Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association, as they relaunch their original name of OONAH and celebrate 10 years of activities and community service at a special ceremony at the Memo soon. HEWI are privileged to have received an invitation and we look forward to working cooperatively with Oonah members again in the future.

Welcome to our 31st year and the comparative good fortune of the Yarra Valley in this disastrous fire season. January is also our membership renewal month so there will be a form attached for your valuable contribution to our small but very active group. With our fees at the lowest possible, you are most welcome to join for several years!

FORESTS

In the last month extensive areas of East Gippsland have been ravaged by devastating bushfires, including forests. As reported in The Age (10 January) DELWP has prepared initial advice warning that "31% of the state's rainforests had already gone up in flames, as well as 24% of wet or damp forests, and 34% of lowland forests". There are fears that some species with restricted ranges may have been lost. Clearly others will be suffering increased threat. Although the fires, so far, have been mainly in East Gippsland and the North East, a catastrophe on this scale will have implications for biodiversity in other regions including the Central Highlands. The DELWP advice estimates that 25% of Sooty Owls have been killed and more than 25% of the state's Greater Gliders. Such losses increase the importance of protecting other forest areas to conserve biodiversity.

And yet there is very real concern that logging pressure in the Central Highlands will be increased to compensate for losses in East Gippsland. At 4pm on Christmas Eve VicForests released a new Timber Release Plan (TRP) adding 157 new coupes in the Central and Powelltown areas. Even as the fires burn and forests are closed to the public, logging has continued in Toolangi, Rubicon and Snob's Creek. Loaded trucks continue to rumble through Healesville, even with a Total Fire Ban in place. At least until the current fire season ends and the effects on biodiversity can be fully assessed, logging in Victoria's native forests needs to be suspended. The Wood Pulp Agreement that mandates supply to Australian Paper in Maryvale must be repealed and support for affected workers should be made available. Salvage logging, which imposes greater damage on forests in burned areas and impedes recovery, must not be allowed. There are already rumours that this is being considered.

On 10 January the period for public comment on the Office of the Conservation Regulator's draft procedure for Identification of Old Growth Forests closed. The method proposed is not suitable and much work needs to be done to improve it. In the meantime, HEWI would like to see all modelled old growth (MOG2019) allocated to Special Protection Zones from which logging is excluded. Much of this has already been lost in the current fires, only increasing the need to urgently protect any that remains intact. Steve M.

Consultation on draft Old Growth Forests Field Identification procedure

Friends of Leadbeater's Possum have written a thoroughly researched and detailed submission to the Chief Conservation Regulator, Kate Gavens, concerning the vested interests of Vic Forests which preclude them from making the ecological assessments that would protect Old Growth Forests from logging. FLBP have submitted that the Office of Conservation Regulator should be empowered and resourced to enact legal proceedings against VicForests if they find logging of Old Growth Forests that breaches regulations.

JANUARY 2020

- 15 HEWI meeting
20 January Newsletter

FEBRUARY

- 07 Black Saturday
Memorial Date:
11th year
1-29 Sustainable Living
Festival
13 HEWI meeting
HL&LC Rm1
7.00-9.00pm
19 Meeting with Cr McAllister
2.30-3.15pm
H'ville Community Link
19 Healesville Community
Bushfire Group
6.30pm

MARCH

- 01 Clean Up Australia Day
Site tba
09 Public Holiday
12 HEWI meeting
15 Rotary Dogs day Out,
Coronation Park
HEWI stall 11am – 3.00pm
18 Meeting with Cr McAllister
20 Year 4 HPS waterbugs
Grace Burn, Queens Park
9.30am – 11.15am
21 Family Waterbugs Workshop
HL&LC 10.00am – 12noon

Our Mallacoota Members

Thank you for all the messages that I was able to pass on to Ro and Kieran Martin who were two of the so many who were evacuated safely but lost their home and garden. However, locked up with plenty of water, their chooks survived! Ro and Kieran are finally back in Mallacoota with their community and with temporary accommodation. Thanks also to the Edwards for offering their Mt Evelyn home, but the Martins were finally able to return in that last convoy on January 15.

"Currently, we understand that many Victorian forests are closed to the public. We also propose that all logging of native forests be suspended until the Statewide effects of the bushfires on forests and wildlife, and the viability of populations, especially of listed threatened species, can be properly assessed. To allow continuing destruction of habitat by logging while forests and wildlife in their millions are burned alive is insensitive and unconscionable."
Steve Meacher

WATERWATCH

The EstuaryWatch & Waterwatch Annual Achievements Report 2018-19 has been finalised, and is available to be viewed. vic.waterwatch.org.au

"The Victorian Government has delivered record funding for improving waterway and catchment health across regional Victoria, including citizen science programs, through a \$222 million investment from 2016-2020. Citizen science programs are an important component of Water for Victoria and the Victorian Waterway Management Strategy and demonstrate the important role communities have in improving Victorian waterways. Many thanks to more than 2,000 dedicated volunteers for their incredible contribution to citizen science, and further thanks to the Catchment Management Authorities and Water Authorities for your support and assistance - much appreciated".

HEWI NOTES

Unfortunately, our WaterWatch team has been depleted and our monthly monitoring has been curtailed, so if you would be willing to assist please contact Karen: 5962 5115.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**Facilitated Events**

Please contact Karen Garth, 5962 5115 or gbfacilitator@gmail.com to volunteer.

Clean Up Australia Day

Our annual event, possibly a new site if approved by our Council Bushland team

BYO gloves, bags and tools provided. Morning tea will be available

★ Sunday 1st March 10.00am -12 noon. Site tba

Rotary Dogs Day Out

Come along and check out our information stall and freebies!

★ Sunday 15 March, 11.00am - 3.00pm, Coronation Park, Healesville

Children's Waterbugs Workshop (also in HL&LC term 1 brochure)

Discover and identify our local waterbugs and learn how they indicate water quality. Many are platypus food!

Entry fee is \$10 per child, who must be accompanied by an adult.

BYO morning snack and drink. Bookings essential

★ Saturday March 21, 10.00am - 12noon, Healesville Living & Learning Centre

WATERBUGS WITH HPS STUDENTS

This year we will have three classes for these wonderful sessions with young enquiring minds and your assistance would be invaluable. We use the picnic shelter in Queens Park behind the pool. No training required but "working with children" is essential.

★ Friday March 20 9.00am – 12noon Queens Park

Volunteers are in high demand for the exceptionally large range and number of not-for-profit groups. HEWI is just one of these and we are fortunate to have several members outside the committee that are committed to specific aspects of our environmental issues. However, your committee would appreciate new faces with or without experience – please call Maureen anytime if you are interested: 0400 211 525.

Stay safe.



**Melbourne
Water**



Years