

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

News in Brief

Fungi – diversity, roles, management and conservation

Dr Tom May, Senior Mycologist at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, will present the diversity and ecological roles of fungi in native vegetation and how to encourage and conserve a healthy fungal community.

> **Wednesday 2 July 7.30pm**
Grand Hotel, Warrandyte

Field trip: Fungi foray

Dr Tom May will lead a fungi foray through Jumping Creek Reserve and Warrandyte State Park. Learn about their ecological roles, how to identify and methods for setting up survey plots.

Seminar attendance and bookings essential: Lyn Meredith: 9840 9326.
> **Thursday 3 July 2014, 10.00 am – 2.00 pm**

Bendigo Bank

Congratulations to our community bank for being the first major bank to refuse to invest in the coal industry. "(Bendigo are) the first recognisable deposit taker to decide that the thermal coal or coal-seam gas industries are unsustainable and unethical... Bendigo's assessment of coal and unconventional gas as being outside of its ethical comfort zone comes at a very, very delicate time for both industries." Financial Review

350.org

This group recently commissioned research which revealed that almost 8 in 10 Australians say they are concerned about their bank (78%) or super fund (77%) financing coal and gas projects in or near the Great Barrier Reef and 72% are concerned about their bank or super fund financing coal and gas anywhere in Australia. This was a steep rise from a limited survey in 2013. HEWI continues to support the highly successful divestment campaign of 350.org.

Wildlife Conservation Course

'the intrepid zoologist'
An intensive 3-4 week course from Endangered Species Recovery to develop fundamental skills as professional wildlife conservation practitioners. Applications by July 14. Details: endangered.species@bigpond.com; (0)3 5966 9075

> **September 7 – October 1**

continued on page 2.

A community group acting to protect and conserve important elements of our local environment

"We have worked extensively in remote Australia. We have shown old Aboriginal men and women stuffed museum specimens of now-vanished mammals, and been struck to our core by their responses: singing the song of that animal, stroking it, telling its story, crying at its loss. Here is an affinity to nature, a deep connection to our land, an ache of responsibility, that we settler Australians have not yet felt or learned. To become part of this country, to care for it properly, we need to grow some of that sense of belonging and affinity. Otherwise, extinctions will continue to be viewed as inconsequential."
More below.....

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORUM

This is the postponed Yarra Ranges Council forum from May with the same agenda and at a venue closer to the field study site. There will be at least one car leaving from Healesville, so contact Maureen if you would like to car pool. Bring suitable clothing for the bushland walk.

'Are revegetation projects viable? (Biodiversity). Are we doing the right thing?'

This theme was originally proposed by HEWI members. We have been concerned that the huge efforts of many groups across the Yarra Ranges in weeding activities and revegetation projects are on isolated sites without an overall land management scheme across the whole shire. To avoid waste of limited resources, HEWI would prefer to see sustainable habitat corridors established, especially along waterways, to ensure continuing maintenance of restored indigenous vegetation.

> **July 26 10:30am to 12:30pm Lunch: 12:30pm**
Montrose Town Hall and Richards Reserve for the case study

FIRE MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC LAND

Southern Ranges Environment Alliance (SREA), the Department of Environment and Primary Industry (DEPI) and Parks Victoria have organised a series of information sessions and site visits in the Dandenongs on planned burning regimes. The first was this month and highlighted the many contentious issues involved with fuel reduction burns. Two more events are planned:

> **Saturday July 12 and Saturday August 16**

STRATEGIC BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN for East Central

'Over the past two years, over 500 people have contributed to the development of this plan including four public workshops in May (attended by several HEWI members). The final plan will be available in late 2014. The plan will describe where the high bushfire risk areas are on public land and private property. It will explain how DEPI plans to tackle the threat of bushfire on public land and the priorities to reduce risk on private land. More specifically, it will:

- identify significant community, infrastructure, economic and environmental assets that are most at risk of fire in the landscape;
- describe bushfire behaviour in the landscape; and
- outline DEPI's strategies and actions to reduce bushfire risk, and monitor our performance to drive continuous improvement over time.'

The majority of attendees at the Healesville 'workshop' were dismayed with the models presented and the obvious haste with which the final plan is being written. Community input was extremely limited as no submissions could be presented – so much for 'community consultation'.

FOREST UPDATES

As logging continues in our forests the recommendations of the Leadbeater's Possum Advisory Group are due to come into effect in a few weeks. It is not expected that they will have much effect. The group's Terms of Reference mandated maintenance of the native forest logging industry although its research indicated that logging and Leadbeater's can no longer co-exist. The option 'considered most likely to have the greatest benefit to the species', a new Great Forest National Park was excluded from the recommendations (A detailed appraisal of the LPAG's weaknesses is available on the Friends of Leadbeater's Possum website: <http://leadbeaters.org.au/latest-news/what-purpose-lpag/>). It is of grave concern that the group's work will now form the basis for a review of the Leadbeater's Action Statement which will be formulated without further opportunity for expert or public comment. This is exactly the sort of skewed

JUNE

**HEWI library display
Healesville's waterways
Impacts of the last 150years**

June 19

**HEWI meeting
HL&LC
6.45 – 9.15pm**

June 20

**HEWI revegetation day
Grace Burn
The Nook
9.30am – 1.00pm**

July 02

Fungi seminar
Warrandyte
7.30pm

July 03

Fungi field trip
Warrandyte
10.00am – 2.00pm

July 12

Fire management

July 17

**HEWI meeting
HL&LC
6.45 – 9.15pm**

July 18

WaterWatch
Physical/Chemical Testing
Grace Burn
Wallace Pde & Queens Park

July 26

Community Engagement
Forum
Montrose Town Hall
and Richards Reserve
10.30am – 1.00pm

policy that is such a concern when the federal government is planning to hand over responsibility for national environmental icons to state, and even local, governments (see HEWI's sub to the Senate Committee: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/EPBC_Bilats_and_cost_recovery_Bills/Submissions – it's number 42).

Once again HEWI has objected to VicForests latest proposal to add another 300 new coupes to their Timber Release Plan. Once again we expect to be ignored – even more so now that the government has changed the legislation so that the amendments only need to be approved by the board of VicForests themselves. Even the pretence of government supervision has been removed!

THE ACTION PLAN FOR AUSTRALIAN MAMMALS 2012 (CSIRO Publishing, June 2014)

Authors: John Woinarski, Andrew Burbidge and Peter Harrison
(see quote above)

This new publication is the first review to assess the conservation status of all Australian mammals. In it, Leadbeater's Possum is upgraded to Critically endangered.

"Twenty-nine Australian land mammals have become extinct over the last 200 years, and 56 are currently facing extinction. These losses and potential losses represent over a third of the 315 species present at the time of European settlement.

We recently published the first review of all Australian mammals, finding that Australia has the worst rate of mammal extinctions in the world, and the situation isn't improving thanks to feral predators such as cats."

The new local law for a total cat curfew in the Yarra Ranges is a most welcome attempt to reduce the population of predatory cats in our region.

HEWI REPORTS:

'Healing' – the community response to this powerful and evocative film was overwhelmingly positive with great turnouts at the Memo for both sessions; Sunday was a complete sell-out! This event has raised almost \$3,000 for our combined campaign to establish a Great Forest National Park. The film highlighted the powerful synergy that exists between our indigenous heritage and human wellbeing today.

We are most grateful to all staff at the Memo for their cooperation, support and organisation for this event. Most of all we congratulate Steve for his inspired initiative to approach the film makers and Council to present this positive, life affirming creation to us all.

Library Display – unfortunately Evelyn's waterways posters have had limited exposure as the display boards were required by ERL elsewhere. However, they have now returned accompanied by a huge waterways map from Melbourne Water. Highly recommended!

Steels Creek market – we finally joined the Steels Creek community for a brief introduction to those present and we received an invitation to contribute to their bimonthly 'The Jolly Thing' which was accepted with pleasure.

SOLAR PANELS

From the Clean Energy Regulator (CER): the proportion of Australians with solar panels rose from 7.5 per cent in March 2011 to 16 per cent in 2013. Solar powered homes: South Australia 28%, Queensland 22%, Western Australia 18%, NSW 11% and Victoria 12%. A new report by Roy Morgan Research shows that home solar is continuing to grow in popularity, despite cuts to incentives such as the feed-in tariff for selling solar-generated electricity back to the grid.

News In Brief cont...

Carbon Compensator Scheme

This is a DRREA (Dandenong Ranges Renewable Energy Association) initiative. Annual vehicle emissions can be covered by a \$10.00 compensation donation. Carbon Compensators for air flights and for emissions from household electricity are also available. A Carbon Compensator Certificate is emailed to all contributors.

The funds are used for solar installations on community buildings.

Contact: Peter Cook pcook@wildcoast.net.au

The Climate Change Action Network of Yarra Ranges Council have produced a very comprehensive calendar of events for July – November including our Walk, Watch and Wonder activity in October. This Live It Up program also features a presentation by Tim Flannery in August – date tba!



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www.hewi.org.au

<http://roundleafpomaderris.org.au>