

Merri Creek Management Committee

Flora and Fauna Report 2017-2018

There were 53 sightings in our fauna book between October 2017 and September 2018. In this year, staff also developed an online workbook enabling them to record sightings in the field. Some sightings are strong indicators of ecological health with implications for current and future conservation priorities.

Platypus sightings continued in 2017-18 with one seen in the Merri Creek at Coburg in June and one observed from the Blyth Street Bridge in July. Community members submitted these reports directly to MCMC and via the [Friends of Merri Creek Facebook page](#).

Eastern Rosellas are rare in the lower Merri, almost certainly due to the lack of tree hollows for nesting. Multiple reports of a pair of Eastern Rosellas in East Brunswick in 2017 and continuing to 2018 indicate that a nest box program may assist this beautiful species to return to the Merri. An investigation into the potential of nestboxes locally was begun underfunding from the [Merri Creek Environment Fund](#).

The most actively visited flowers during a community survey of plant pollinators in November 2017, were those of a planted Fireweed Groundsel, *Senecio linearifolius*, at Moomba Park Fawkner. This is a relatively common native daisy in Victoria, but is known from just a single location on the Merri. As a result of this survey, renewed efforts were made to propagate and plant this species in MCMC sites during 2018.

A Melbourne Water-funded conservation project for White Elderberry, *Sambucus gaudichaudiana*, began with taking cuttings from ten remnant plants on the Merri in 2017. In June 2018, nineteen resulting plants were planted at Northcote and Craigieburn and appeared to be thriving at the time of writing. Project partner, Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Cooperative, also reported raising 200 seedlings from the plant's berries. These successes will contribute to building a conservation program for this locally rare plant.



Western Golden-tip

The endangered Tough Scurf-Pea, *Cullen tenax*, was observed flowering at Laffan Reserve in December 2017, nearly a decade after it was last seen at the site. This is an example of a group of short-lived plants that persist as soil-stored seedbanks, sometimes re-appearing after years of apparent absence from the landscape. In January, volunteers from VINC and CERES were on hand at Galada Tamboore East (Thomastown) when MCMC staff identified dozens of recently emerged shrubs of the rare Western Golden-tip, *Goodia medicaginea*, a species not been seen at this location for over ten years. Friends of Merri Creek subsequently received a grant to conduct restoration at this species-rich site over the next three years.