

# *Merri e-News* NOVEMBER 2014

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Newsletter of Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC)  
2 Lee Street Brunswick East Victoria 3057

## **Melbourne's Water: Pro-active from Brunswick**

Thanks to a \$200,000 [Living Victoria Fund Round Two grant](#), we are about to begin work on a challenging new 'whole of water cycle management' project. Rainwater tanks, smart meter water consumption devices and low-water use indigenous plant species are all part of the project at the co-located Brunswick North West Primary School and Montessori Children's House kindergarten in Brunswick West. A new green space for community will also be created along the former Melville Creek (now derelict and flood-prone Melville Main Drain), which crosses the northern end of the school. The project will build upon existing initiatives and involve the whole school community – staff, students, parents and residential neighbours - to grow community understanding of whole-of-water-cycle management during 2015. Watch out for future news on this exciting initiative.

## **Auditing schools' rain tank use**

MCMC has initiated a new project funded by Whittlesea City Council involving an online survey with all Whittlesea schools about the use of their rain tanks, a follow-up visit and an onsite audit to help them better utilise their rain water. [>> Read more](#)

## **Lakeside Update – Merri Creek 'open space'**

In our last *Merri e-News* we reported on plans to rezone and sell off the [former Lakeside Secondary College](#) in Radford Rd Reservoir. The site includes a long frontage to Merri Creek and the Merri Shared Trail. More recently, the Education Dept presented Darebin Council with four options for the land. These included paying \$925,000 for the full area of creek-side land behind the former school. Not surprisingly, Council opted for the option of a cost-free easement over the Trail. In addition Council decided to lobby the Environment Minister to declare the entire parkland area behind the school as Crown Land, a position we strongly support. See the full details in Darebin [Council minutes of 15 September 2014](#) (Item 9.12, p.117).

## **Merri Creek stars in song and prose**

Merri Creek's high profile regularly extends into the arts. The latest promotion comes through two prominent creative Australians.

Premier singer songwriter, [Paul Kelly](#), is about to commence touring his latest album, the *Merri Soul Sessions*, so named because the songs were recorded in a Northcote studio right by Merri Creek. [>> Read more](#)

And Merri Creek 'stars' in well-known author Peter Carey's latest book, [Amnesia](#). The novel is set in part, in Coburg in the 1980s, where the polluted weed-infested Merri features in the landscape. The infamous Nufarm site in Fawkner, where chemicals for Agent Orange defoliant herbicide were

manufactured during the Vietnam War, is a focus for environmental activism, under the name 'Agrikem'. MCMC's President, Ann McGregor and her husband Bruce McGregor, accompanied Peter Carey on a visit to Merri Creek last year, as part of the author's preparation and understanding of community activism for Merri Creek.

## Habitat Gardening Workshop Inspires

Sixteen people attended an engaging Habitat Gardening Workshop at our depot in East Brunswick on 25 October. Practical tips were easily at hand from our own front garden and nature strips which are filled with indigenous plants (and a few weeds). One enthused participant told us afterwards: "I went home very inspired to think much more about habitat gardening, particularly my nature strip and a patch in my backyard, as well as around Merri station where I've been working with the [Merri Stationeers](#). I liked the mix of theory and practical observation at the Merri Creek Management Committee depot."

To see the top ten indigenous plants we recommend for residential gardens visit our [Habitat Heroes](#). The Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association also have a useful page on [indigenous gardens](#).

The Workshop was supported by a State Government *Communities for Nature* grant to the Friends of Merri Creek. We hope to offer similar workshops in the future, though we will need to charge a fee unless we garner other support. If you're interested, let us know [admin@mcmc.org.au](mailto:admin@mcmc.org.au)

## Moreland to have new wetland

Moreland City Council has just announced funding from Melbourne Water to create a stormwater treatment wetland near the confluence of the Merri and Edgars Creek in Coburg. The design for the wetland is now in its final stages before it is released for public consultation. Along with the Friends of Merri Creek and Friends of Edgars Creek, we have provided advice on the design.

We congratulate the Friends of Merri Creek for initiating the idea of a wetland more than 10 years ago, in July 2004 to be precise, and for lobbying for the wetland ever since. Moreland City Council also deserves congratulations for committing to the wetland and following it through.

## Success – 'Need for Seed' Grant

The Friends of Merri Creek have gained an innovative new grant that we'll be helping to implement. The funding of \$49,810 is from the State Government's *Communities For Nature* grants program for: *The Need for Seed – re-establishing capacity for regeneration by depleted flora along the Merri Creek*. This project aims to enhance remnant vegetation and to establish genetically selected plantings of three depleted plants to act as 'seed orchards' for further revegetation. The key seed plants are Brown-back Wallaby Grass (*Rytidosperma duttonianum*), Rock Correa (*Correa glabra*) and Sticky Boobialla (*Myoporum petiolatum*). The seed orchard will be established on a Merri Creek escarpment in Fawkner. It's linked in to a range of other vegetation management works at key remnant sites. Watch out for community events, coming up in Fawkner in 2015.

## New Merri community events trailer

Thanks to the Friends of Merri Creek, we now have use of a new trailer specially designed to transport equipment to Merri community events. The trailer was partly financed by a 2013 grant of \$2500 from the Australian Government's [Volunteer Grants program](#). The Friends also contributed

\$1250 of their own funds. The trailer made its debut at [MECCARG](#)'s Murnong Gathering event on 8 November, by the Merri in Coburg. It's big enough to carry marquees, BBQs, food and other equipment, is lockable and waterproof. Watch out for the trailer at upcoming [Merri events](#).

## 25 years of Friends of Merri Creek

Special congratulations are due to the [Friends of Merri Creek](#) who are celebrating 25 years of tremendous work along the Merri Creek. This includes many years of strong advocacy for the creation of creek corridor public parklands, a challenge still being pursued. The Friends' November newsletter [Merri Growler](#) is a celebratory 12 pages and in full colour, with an excellent double page spread on moths. You can keep track of Friends events and musings by [becoming a member](#) and liking the [Friends Facebook page](#).

## Ten years of Wallan Environment Group

We also give our congratulations to the [Wallan Environment Group](#). The group is celebrating ten years since starting out as Friends of Wallan Creek and overseeing an amazing transformation of Wallan Community Park (see before and after [photos](#)). Their 2014 [President's Report](#) describes many of the group's achievements and a [Strategic Plan](#) outlines goals for the future. The Wallan Environment Group is an active member of the Merri Creek Management Committee and we thank them for the effective and engaging work they do in the upper Merri catchment.

## NEWSFLASH: Golden Sun Moths seen

Golden Sun Moths have already been seen this year. You can be a citizen scientist by registering for a [Habitat Survey](#) on Thursday 4 December, or a [General Survey](#), whenever the conditions are right.

If you can't get to see a real Golden Sun Moth, you can at least see a print by our own Angela Foley, in the Australian Print Workshop exhibition *Impressions 2014*, at 210 Gertrude St Fitzroy, Tues to Sat 10am – 5pm from 28/11/14 to 13/01/15.

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*Acknowledging the Wurundjeri People as the Traditional Custodians of the land of the Merri Merri*