

Merri e-News

DECEMBER 2015

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

Wow – what an Exhibition!

Ten photographic panels tell the story of the Merri Creek's transformation from a weed-smothered drain to a much-loved waterway running through a bushland corridor. The exhibition celebrates community achievements since 1975, as well as the 26th birthdays of MCMC and Friends of Merri Creek. Local author, Shane Maloney opened this enlightening exhibition to a large audience at Brunswick Library on 6 October. The opening also featured a lovely Welcome to Country from Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Georgina Nicholson.



The exhibition remained at Brunswick Library for October, then went to Coburg Library for November, and is at the [CERES Visitor Centre](#) for December. It will be in Richmond Library in February 2016. The two metre high panels are well worth seeing; you can also view the story panels on [screen](#), and the evocative rear panels [here](#).

Merri Presentation by Ann & Bruce McGregor

Ann and Bruce McGregor have been caring for our natural heritage along the Merri for 39 years and still going strong. These Friends of Merri Creek Life members gave an inspiring presentation about their work and the transformation they have supported. The Age published an [article](#) about Ann, Bruce and the exhibition.

Somerton Fire: Serious Impact on Merri Creek

[A large fire at an illegally operated wood dump](#) in Somerton has seriously polluted Merri Creek after burning for about a week in late November. A 7km stretch of Merri Creek between Somerton and Campbellfield was heavily impacted by runoff from the fire-fighting operations, resulting in fish deaths and presumed death of most other creek life. This section of Merri Creek is key habitat for the endangered Growling Grass Frog.

To deal with these extreme conditions, Melbourne Water actively pumped out the polluted Merri Creek water at Barry Rd, Campbellfield and introduced clean water into the creek to improve oxygen levels. [More details of Melbourne Water's efforts.](#) These efforts were effective in halting the downstream spread of polluted water and in improving the water quality in the affected area. Here's a [more complete report](#) on the issue.



Staff Changes

Dave Woods our Parkland Works Coordinator moved to Cambodia in October, after almost six years with MCMC. Jonathan Wilson has now taken over this critical role. Meg Maroney returned from her parental leave in late October to a new Parkland Works Coordinator Assistant



role (part time). Clayton Fenech, who has been with MCMC's Parkland Team for four years, is leaving at the end of December to take up new opportunities. We are welcoming a number of temporary Parkland Team Members who have been appointed for the next 6 months including Chris Geary, Sarah Boys, and Simon Despoja.

Tawny Frogmouths - more and Merri-er

Tawny frogmouths are becoming more common along Merri Creek's middle reaches and four nesting sites have been spotted on a 2 kilometre walk between Egan's Reserve in Coburg and CERES in Brunswick. We think this is because revegetation sites make ideal hunting grounds, the eucalypts planted around 25 years ago are now mature enough to support Frogmouths, and they are relatively safe along the Merri from their main threat- the speeding car. See more [here](#).



Dogs and Merri Creek Parkland: Sharing the Space

A new leaflet on [responsible dog ownership](#) outlines how dogs can be managed along the Merri Creek in ways that support local wildlife and ensure that volunteers and park workers can avoid the 'yuk' factor. The leaflet was produced as part of a Melbourne Water funded bushland restoration project based in Preston and Thornbury. See more [here](#).

Students connect – *without* social media

Young Campbellfield Heights Primary School students visited Galada Tamboore in October and sat beside Merri Creek learning to connect with the place as Wurundjeri Country, including the use of Woiwurrung language names for plants in their botanic drawings. This visit was funded by a State Government Communities for Nature grant to Friends of Merri Creek.



Grant for philanthropic partnerships

MCMC was one of only 24 community organisations to receive funding from the Australian Government's Department of Social Services to showcase philanthropic partnerships. MCMC received \$10,000 for the project: *Stepping into Print - Philanthropic Support for Engaging the Community and Moving into the Literature*. It involves exploring, celebrating and sharing the outcomes of successful partnerships through a series of innovative events. In December we'll be holding a workshop, including a Wurundjeri Welcome (by invitation only but let us know if you're interested). The project is supported by the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal.

No drips among these students

Brunswick North West Primary School students celebrated their water project supported by MCMC and a State Government grant: *Melbourne's water: Proactive from Brunswick*, in their thriving new indigenous garden Yakai Barring (Woiwurrung for



'surprise track') by thinking about how water works at school around a symbolic blue drip. Then in early December the garden had an inspiring and well-attended public launch. MCMC's manager spoke at the opening about the importance of community partnerships and the support of the state government for such initiatives.

Grant for strengthening cultural ties

MCMC received \$12,900 funding from Yarra City Council for the project: *Merri Yarra Biik: Strengthening the Merri Yarra confluence area environmentally and culturally*, which aims to build the relationship between the Wurundjeri Council and community including MCMC. It is planned to plant 300 indigenous plants and support Wurundjeri ceremonies and culture such as traditional scarring of suitable trees.

This will build on an earlier partnership project funded by Port Phillip and Westernport CMA, where up to nine participants from Wurundjeri Tribe Council worked together with MCMC to share their ideas about planning projects for important places.

Bunjil looks over new garden

Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Perry Wandin, and his daughter Renee created a fabulous contribution to Thornbury Primary School's new Woiwurrung indigenous garden by carving Bunjil high up into the 3 metre tall tree stump in October. MCMC facilitated the carving and organised the indigenous garden as part of our *Learning Grounds* program.



Jigsaw comes together for Plains Yam Daisy conservation

MCMC reached a milestone in our replenishing of the vulnerable Plains Yam Daisy; November monitoring showed at least 177 thriving **new** plants! These are the result of our direct sowing six months ago. Over the last five years our Communities for Nature project has pieced together a [jigsaw of facts](#) about the Plains Yam Daisy and its restoration in the Merri Creek valley.

You can [register](#) to receive invitations to MCMC plant conservation projects.



Vale John McLean - ex MCMC Parkland Management Team member

John Mclean worked at MCMC for a couple of years prior to 1996 and helped put up the main shed in the depot. Deb Lawson, another ex-employee, writes how she met John before they worked together at MCMC and immediately noticed his beaming smile. She was lucky enough to spend time with him while he was not so ill, when they went to Galada Tamboore the "spiritual birthplace" (his words). Deb says that John touched the hearts of all people he met; he was a generous, engaging, very philosophical and brave and gracious to the end.

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

