

Merri e-News

DECEMBER 2016

Newsletter of the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC)

Celebrating the Merri-Yarra confluence

In September fifty people came together from many different organisations, beside a rushing Yarra River, to listen, enjoy and participate in activities that respect the area as Wurundjeri Country. The *Merri Yarra Biik* project, supported by the City of Yarra, has enabled another partnership project between Merri Creek Management Committee and Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation & Cultural Heritage Council. This project meant a representative group including Wurundjeri Elders could explore little known local areas and work towards this fresh celebration of the Merri-Yarra Confluence in Clifton Hill.





Buzzing around the wild pollinators

The Friends of Merri Creek and MCMC held our first Wild Pollinator Count on 13 November, funded by donors to the [Help the Blue-banded Bee](#) campaign and the Victorian Government.

MCMC's Brian Bainbridge pointed out next year's planting sites around Bababi Djinanang in Fawkner, placed a 'bee hotel' in the grassland and explained how to do a pollinator count. Participants can now submit their own data to the [National Pollinator Count](#) which aims to understand more about the thousands of native pollinator species.

The project's 'Blue Banded Bee Band' gig, supported by high profile local musicians, attracted lots of interest and was profiled by [The Guardian](#).

[Find out more about the project.](#)

Connecting Kids to River Red Gums

In November, 200 school children from five schools across Whittlesea and Moreland participated in our first ever 'Red Gum



Gathering.' MCMC staff first provided school incursions and excursions about local River Red Gums where students learned about Red Gum biology, conservation values and threats. This was followed by a well-attended 'kids teaching kids' style conference. Students designed and presented workshops about protecting our River Red Gums in various mediums including game shows, board games, short films, and more. The program was made possible by a grant from the Dahl Trust (now [Eucalypt Australia](#)) and the Cities of Whittlesea and Moreland.

The Merri Creek Exhibition continues



The outstanding exhibition [Merri Creek - from Wasteland to Parklands](#) has now toured the entire Merri catchment. It was displayed at 12 public libraries, as well as CERES in East Brunswick, Melbourne Water in Docklands (*photo*), and the Dept of Environment Land Water & Planning in East Melbourne.

It continues to celebrate the community's transformation of Merri Creek from a weed-smothered drain to a much-loved waterway at single events like the Friends of Merri Creek AGM and Melbourne Water's River Health Award. In mid-February 2017 it will be displayed in the EPA foyer.

[Contact us](#) if you'd like to discuss hosting the Exhibition panels.

Grass Identification Workshop

MCMC held a 'Basics of Grass Identification' workshop for Mitchell Shire Council in December. The workshop's 28 enthusiastic participants from the Shire's parks crews and contracting teams learnt, or refreshed their understanding of, the parts of a grass plant. The group then observed and discussed 14 grass species in the field and used current electronic and physical resources for grass identification.

Please [contact us](#) if your organisations or group would like MCMC to run this workshop, or develop a tailored workshop. A delivery fee will apply.

MCMC discovers a rare butterfly

In November MCMC's Ecological Restoration Planner, Brian Bainbridge, discovered a butterfly only known from a handful of sites in Victoria! The Yellow Ochre Butterfly *Trapezites lutea*, sometimes called the Rare White-spot Skipper, doesn't travel far and is probably breeding on Wattle-mat Rush, *Lomandra filiformis*. It was seen at Heathcote Junction while MCMC staff were re-establishing native grasses after ground disturbance from a pipeline project. This is 20 kilometres from the nearest record for the Yellow Ochre Butterfly in Broadford. [Read more.](#)



Awards for Friends of Merri Creek

Congratulations to our member group Friends of Merri Creek for recently winning two awards for their work. The first, in late October, was a Community Environment Recognition Award from Environment Victoria for outstanding contribution to our environment - in bringing life back to the Merri Creek.

The second, in late November, was a Community Grants Recognition Award from the Melbourne Water River Health Incentives Program for *"above and beyond contribution to protecting the health of our waterways"*. The projects acknowledged by the Award were delivered by MCMC staff who also prepared the original grant applications, in collaboration with the Friends.

Another fantastic Murnong Gathering

Congratulations to the Merri and Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group who held their unique, annual Murnong Gathering in mid- November. The event

included a Wurundjeri Welcome to Country from Aunty Di Kerr, the Djirri Djirri dancers (joined by many in the audience), weaving, and of course the harvest and cook up of the endangered Murnong, along with other bush tucker. MCMC staff provided marquees, and equipment and assistance for the BBQ. A grant from Moreland Council helped support the event. [See photos of the event.](#)



New Council representatives on MCMC

As a result of the recent Council elections, we have new councillor representatives on the MCMC Committee of management: We welcome Crs Trent McCarthy and Susan Rennie for City of Darebin, replacing Vince Fontana; Cr Natalie Abboud for City of Moreland, replacing Lenka Thompson; and Cr Rob Eldridge for Shire of Mitchell, replacing Kevin Mulroney. Rob was formerly the Wallan Environment Group representative on MCMC. We thank the departing councillors and welcome back long term representative Cr Steven Kozmevski for City of Whittlesea. The City of Hume is yet to appoint their councillor representative.

Staff Changes

After more than ten years in various roles at MCMC, we are farewelling Jane Bevelander, who has been MCMC Water-watch Coordinator since 2010. During 2016 Jane job-shared the Waterwatch Coordinator position with Julia Cirillo, who will now take over this role. We wish Jane the very best with her position as [Yarrowee River Project Officer](#) in Ballarat.



We welcome Jessica Slade to an ongoing Parkland Management Team position, following her excellent contribution as a temporary Team Member. And we congratulate Michael Longmore who has been promoted to a Parkland Team leadership role after 6.5 years on the Team, including 3.5 of these years as part-time Ecological Technical Assistant.

Merri Creek community events in summer

Check the calendar on our [website](#) for all the upcoming community events. Sign up for notification of events by emailing admin@mcmc.org.au or 'like' the [Friends of Merri Creek facebook page](#) and subscribe to events.

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