

SUMMER 2010
Newsletter No.23



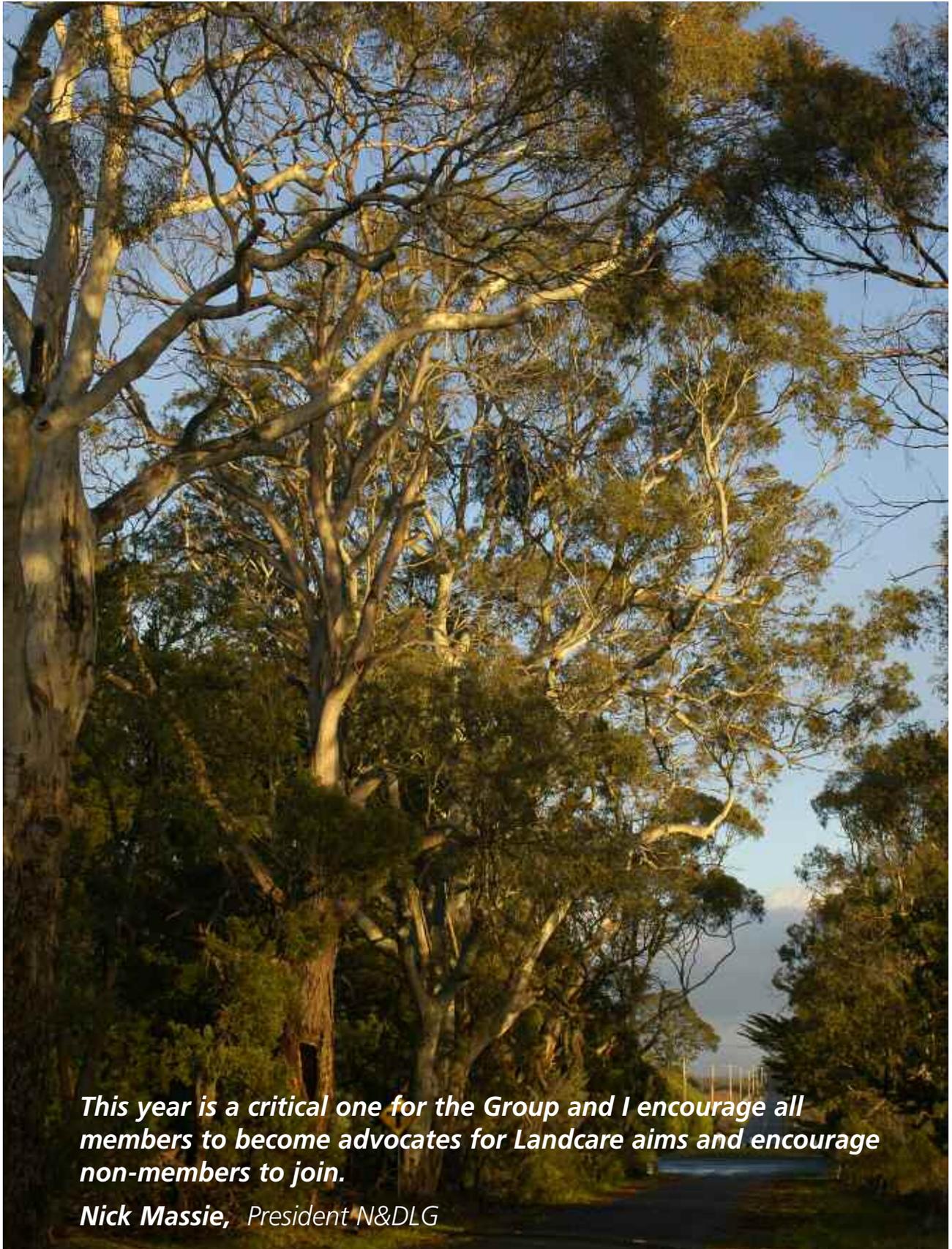
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Newham & District Landcare Group



**Working towards a
healthier environment**

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442



This year is a critical one for the Group and I encourage all members to become advocates for Landcare aims and encourage non-members to join.

Nick Massie, President N&DLG

President's Message

The committee trusts all our members had a very happy and rewarding Christmas.

The committee has been very busy preparing an exciting events calendar for 2010. This Newsletter contains full details and I urge you all to book early and keep the listing on your fridge.

Protection of our environment is a key goal of Newham & District Landcare and this year we have made a submission to the Macedon Ranges Shire Council encouraging them to better resource this aspect of Council's responsibility. This is more pertinent this year given the Council's endorsement of a Shire wide environmental strategy. In addition we are developing a "Hot Spots" project that ties in with the Council's strategy, and will seek Council's support in implementing the project.

This year is a critical one for the Group and I encourage all members to become advocates for Landcare aims and encourage non-members to join.

Nick Massie

Christmas BBQ

On the 5th December 2009 over 100 members and their guests attended the annual BBQ in Wesley Park.

All the traditional events were enjoyed by all with new winners for the throwing the wellie and three legged race. Stephen Mahon, with a new partner (daughter Jess) won the egg tossing for the 2nd year running and may be handicapped for next year's function. Tony Dooley, in fine form, won the gumboot toss.

Again a splendid spread was provided by the ladies and the men stepped up to cook the meat on the BBQ provided by the CFA and a committee member.

See photos on pages 6-7.

Group contacts

President: Nick Massie. **Treasurer:** Hilary Roberts.

Committee members: Penny Roberts, Don Lang, Sue Massie, Jim Sansom, John Luckock.

New members, general queries: Penny Roberts, 5427 0795.

Roadsides: Sue Massie, 5427 0665.

Newham Primary: Jenny Waugh, 5427 0408.

Animal pests: John Luckock, 5427 0909.

Wesley Park: Fran Spain, 5427 0661.

Flora, library, small tools, grants: Penny Roberts, 5427 0795.

Spray trailer: Chris Wiggett, 5423 5279.

The committee meets on the first Monday of the month [February to December] between 7.30 – 9pm in Newham. All members are welcome to attend the Committee meetings to become more involved or raise specific matters. Please advise a committee member if you wish to attend. Meetings start and finish on time... and we enjoy them!

DIARY OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Saturday 13th

Annual Summer Dinner-on-the-Hill

to welcome new members and new neighbours.

6pm until whenever, 159 Dons Rd, Newham.

BYO just about everything – *except for 'first-timers'* – drinks, seat, utensils and plate, glass etc. and something for the shared table (can be savoury or sweet).

RSVP to Penny 5427 0795 – indicating numbers and nature of contribution to shared table.

MARCH

Sunday 7th

Clean Up Australia Day

Contact Nick 5427 0065

Saturday 13th

Sustainability Forum

Contact Jim 5427 0408

Saturday 27th

Batty evening at Hanging Rock Reserve with Lindy Lumsden

This is a re-run of the highly successful evening we held in 2008.

Lindy has been researching Australian bats for 30 years – find out about these fascinating creatures and see them close up.

5.45 – 9.30pm. Cost \$10 per adult, \$5 children (7+), family ticket (2 adults, 2 children) \$25.

Includes entry fee to the reserve, BBQ meal and tea/coffee/cake.

BYO chair (or rug) and torch.

Bookings/payment through Penny 5427 0795. PO BOX 314, Woodend, 3442.

APRIL

Friday 16th

Film Night at Newham Hall – 'Our Seeds: Seeds Blong Yumi'

This 57 minute film made for Pacific audiences, celebrates the diversity of plants, empiric seed saving practices and diverse farming cultures around the world. The film explores the relationship between traditional biodiversity and traditional culture in the wide-ranging locations and shows that there are the same problems and solutions in each of them.

A small crew comprising Seed Savers directors, Michel Fanton and Jude Fanton, shot 160 hours of footage in eleven countries: Spain, France, Italy, India, Sri Lanka, China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

There are interviews with farmers and expert commentators and documented seed saving, farming methods and cultural activities in both first world and tribal locations. Peasants in advanced countries, such as Taiwan, Spain, France and Italy share the same sentiments as indigenous Pacific farmers when it comes to traditional varieties.

Additional instructive motion graphics and a rich sound track using both indigenous and western music add to the enjoyment of this film.

Group Plantings in 2009

Two corporate plantings, two members plantings and one 'official' group planting took place in 2009. The corporate group plantings were at funded project sites and significantly eased the planting load for the individual landowners concerned. Group sessions are always enjoyable – several hours planting with good company followed by a sociable lunch. If you would like some support for your planting – advice, extra hands, tools etc – this can be organized through the group. Information sheets relating to group planting sessions and planting technique are available if you do not already have them – contact Penny, 5427 0795 or penroberts@bigpond.com



Plant Profile: Magenta Cranes-bill



Have you noticed a pink flowering plant at Wesley Park? Well, this is it! *Pelagonium rodneyanum* (Magenta Cranes-bill) has a tidy basal clump of leaves that are mid – dark green, with masses of flowers appearing above the foliage from mid-Spring and all through Summer. Found naturally throughout the Newham district – from rocky outcrops to remnant roadside grasslands – it is a lovely addition to any native planting. Try planting it with *Wahlenbergia* species (Native Bluebells) or use both in amongst native grasses.

Pests are pests

Even the least observant of us will have noticed the large number of rabbits in our area at present. Rabbit kittens are about much later in the season than usual, probably because of the plentiful green grass resulting from good summer rains.

Rabbits and foxes are the major pests causing economic losses in the Newham and District Landcare area, according to a survey conducted amongst landholders late in 2007. The costs and lost opportunities that they cause are very substantial, and cannot be ignored.

A co-ordinated campaign over a wide area is the most effective way to succeed in reducing rabbit populations. Smaller campaigns suffer from the problem of reinfestation from untreated adjoining areas.

A typical control programme is in three parts, a baiting or fumigating campaign to reduce animal numbers, followed by destruction of habitat by ripping of warrens and removal of cover such as blackberries, then revegetation of the ripped areas with native plants. The baiting or fumigating and revegetation stages require time but not a lot of cost, whereas ripping can be expensive but it is the most important part because habitat destruction discourages reinfestation of the area, and thus brings long term benefits.

Newham & District Landcare Group can provide some assistance to members. In particular, a small quantity of fumigant tablets is available for gassing burrows at no cost, and guidance can be given in techniques for use of this material. Contact John Luckock on 5427 0909 for assistance.

You have a responsibility to your neighbours to control the pests on your property, and they have the same responsibility to you. Now is a good time to take action.



Christmas BBQ 2009

Exceptional sporting skills were shown by all contestants, and the winners were –

left; Egg Toss Champions, Stephen Mahon and daughter Jess.

right; Tom Dooley a worthy Gumboot Champion.





Book reviews

Book reviews courtesy of Natalie Wiggett who reviewed them for *Aesops Attic in Kyneton*.

Australian Magpie – Biology and Behaviour of an Unusual Songbird

Gisela Kaplan

Reading this book will tell you so many things about Magpies you never knew before. There is information about their nesting habits, mating, swooping and why they swoop, and much more. You will find out that they mate for life, that 97% of swoopers are males, and that Magpie development does not only involve the process of physical maturation but also intensive periods of learning. I would recommend reading this book if you are at all interested in learning about Magpies, either for a school purpose for children, or just to understand them and their habits.

A Wild Australia Guide – Lizards

Steve Parish and Stephan Swanson

There are more than 840 species of reptile, contained within 16 families and Australia is host to many of these Lizards, Geckoes, Legless Lizards, Dragons, Monitors and Skinks. This book explains how to identify Lizards, what their predators are and how to keep them in captivity. Each reptile is described and information on its habitat, behaviour, breeding, diet, size and status (endangered or secure) is supplied. This book is perfect for a children's project, or just to identify what lizards you have in your garden.

TreeProject order for 2010

Once again a group order has been placed with TreeProject – species being determined by what seed was available when the order was placed in November 2009. It is not too late to discuss your needs for 2010 – as well as future years – as this is peak seed collecting season. If it can't be managed in 2010, at least we can ensure that seed will be collected for the following year. Once the Autumn break has occurred, and we all feel like planting again, a list of species available, an idea of numbers and arrangements for purchasing them (at the bargain price of 30c per forestry tube!!) will be sent to you.

Contact Penny on 5427 0795.



Left: Treeproject stock this year will include native bluebell, spiny mat-rush and tall wallaby grass seedlings, seen here growing on in forestry tubes.

Right: Assorted other species are still 'on-the-bench' awaiting pricking out into forestry tubes. These species are sown en masse in a small container and then separated ('pricked out').

