

Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a
healthier environment



Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND 3442

Newsletter Editors: Paul & Marie Marmara

Vision & Mission

Newham & District Landcare Group has the following Vision and Mission.

Vision: To enhance biodiversity and natural ecosystems within the local environment.

Mission: To raise awareness of, protect and enhance the local environment.

This will be achieved by bringing the community together to address environmental problems, to appreciate the natural landscape, to assist in promoting sustainable agricultural production promoting the benefits of working and sharing together.

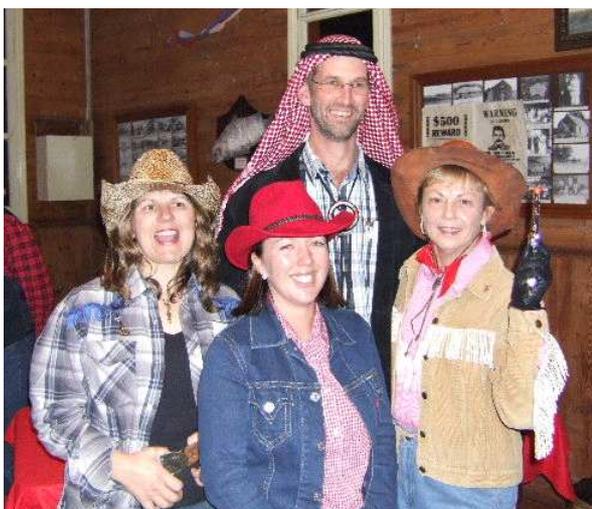
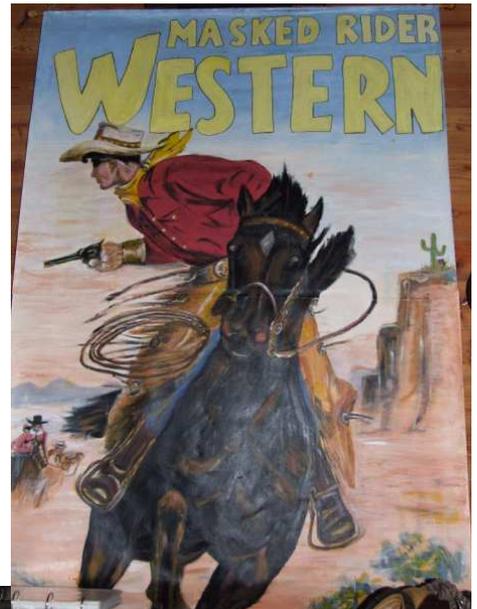
Winter Dinner –What a Hoot

On 28th June 2008 Newham & District Landcare Group held their annual winter dinner. Some 60 people attended the dinner. The Hall was decorated in a western theme with hay bales, posters, saloon signs and a magnificent painting by Fran Spain of a cowboy centre stage. Organised by Kathy Maxted with help from Fran Spain, Penny Roberts and other Landcare members, hearty congratulations are in order.

After a magnificent feast, dancing was enjoyed by all with the “Macedon Ranges Rockers” providing the music and dance tuition.

Below is a selection of pictures from the night which demonstrate the fun enjoyed by all.

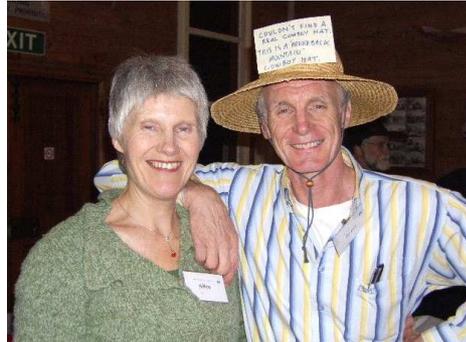
A prize is offered for those who email the editor naming all those featured.



Who are we?



News Items



Some more Winter Dinner incriminating photos

Landcare and Newham Primary School

The invitation to help Jenny Waugh (5427 0408) with encouraging school participation in environmental matters is open. All the more relevant with the upgrade of the buildings that is about to happen.

Pest Animal Control Project

Work continues on the pest control project with a recent demonstration of what is possible to be undertaken on your property to reduce rabbits and foxes.

If you wish to know more contact John Luckock 5427 0909 or Bob Evans on 5427 0784.

Roadside Management Group

The "Weedies" have been active with members of the group mapping Forest Road and inputting the data into the Macedon Ranges Council database. This information is used by the Council to establish priorities within the Council's weed eradication program. To date the Weedies efforts has ensured that the Newham district has been elevated in the Council's priority for works with the roads that have been mapped and data entered of Don's Road, Egan's Lane, Jim Road, Colwells Road, Wiseman's Lane and Doherty's Road all receiving spraying. The Group is congratulated for this outcome. Next to be done are Croziers Road and Whitebridge Road. Lachlan Milne, MRSC, Environmental Resource Officer, has advised that the weed contract went to Council on 25th June, so follow up work on Jim Road, Dons Road and Egan's Lane will commence in spring/summer. In regard to regrowth in Egan's Lane Lachlan has suggested that it would be good to get some follow up action from residents as well and thought a project to get a groomer in is probably the best way to get some of the massive infestation down. Newham District Landcare Group will discuss this option.

The "weedies" encourage all members to lobby the State Government which is proposing to reduce funding for roadside weed eradication.

Planting Days

Information sheets on organizing a planting day are available – contact Penny or Hilary [5427 0795]

Web Page—Website up and running.

All members are invited to look at the new NDLG website and to encourage potential members to log on and explore the information it contains. There is information on joining Landcare, advantages of joining, current groups and projects, trees that are recommended for our area and a calendar of events.

The address is: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~newhamlc/index.htm>

Incense sticks, polar bears and Newham

If we all left a window open at home it probably wouldn't warm Newham, but it certainly *would* make a difference to the temperature at home! Those who attended our recent session on improving the thermal efficiency of buildings learnt that the no.1 priority is to stop air leaks in the home – around doors and windows, between floors and skirting, through exhaust fans and air vents etc.

No.2 priority is insulation – with ceiling the most important, followed by walls and floors.

Did you know?

- that halogen down-lights effectively put a 'hole' in your ceiling, due to the area that must be kept clear of insulation because of their heat production, in addition to being inefficient producers of light.
- that an incense stick is a good tool for locating draughts *which should then be stopped!*

News Items

Tree Planting Day – This can be your experience

As part of our **Green** Initiative, Printgraphics, decided to organise a tree planting day to offset our carbon emissions and minimise our environmental footprint. This is their experience.

By contacting Landcare we organised on Sunday 25th May to meet at a farm in the Kyneton/Woodend area. We were warmly welcomed by the owners of the farm, Keith & Chris Wiggett and members of the local TreeProject/Landcare group. We had committed to planting 750 trees – the amount required to offset our level of emissions.

By 10.30 am staff, friends and clients had all arrived in our oldest clothes, gardening gloves at the ready, and were walked up a track from the farm house to where all was ready for us to start.

TreeProject/Landcare provided the plants that were either indigenous to the area or suitable for the local conditions. They also provided digging tools, buckets, weed mats, protection triangles made from biodegradable plastic, and mallets to hammer the stakes that hold the protection triangles in place. Printgraphics commitment was to pay for the plants and provide the labour.

The trees we were to plant were part of a long term plan to provide natural corridors for wildlife so they can move between the many national parks in the area.

There were six TreeProject/Landcare volunteers who stayed with us all day and organised us into groups. They demonstrated how to dig, and then plant the trees. Before long we got into the swing of it and we were off...

There was lots of banter, laughs and enthusiasm. The farm owner was kept busy trucking water up from the dam then filling the many buckets to water in the plants. Everyone got involved, even the children became very enthusiastic watering, hammering or placing weed mats with the plants. The older children soon learned how to remove the small plants from their tubes and carefully place them in the pre dug holes.

By 1.00 pm our backs were aching and our tummies rumbling, so we downed tools and walked across the paddock to the large shed where the host family had prepared a fantastic lunch. Hot pots of soup and delicious home made bread were a welcome sight! Not to mention the BBQ sausages, assortment of cakes then tea and coffee to finish with.

The red tin shed way down the back of the paddock with the coloured curtain over one side was a source of wonder and amusement for the children – a real bush dunny!

When our tummies were full and we're feeling very contented, we were told that instead of 750 trees we had actually planted 1000!! But for those still willing, they had another 350 to go! Now that we knew the routine and after such a wonderful morning's effort, we felt we could plant these last few trees in no time – and we did, just like a well oiled machine!

It was a wonderful day out. To see the families working together and thoroughly enjoying themselves was delightful. As a 7 year old said – *"I didn't want to do this 'cos I thought I wouldn't like it, but this is so much fun, I really love it"*.

It was such a success that it will become an annual event!

Small Equipment Available

Members have access to 15L back-pack spray units, Hamilton planters, weed wands, long handled ratchet mechanism loppers and some mattocks. Contact for borrowing items is the Roberts household in the first instance – 5427 0795.

Trailer-mounted Spray unit [600L]

Members have access to Spray Trailer at a hire charge of \$50 per day (\$25 for subsequent or part day) is to cover future maintenance requirements and a Trailer Warden fee per use. The Trailer Warden will ensure you know how to operate the unit and explain conditions of use. Keith Wiggett has been appointed trailer warden for the coming year. Contact him on 5423 5279 if you would like to hire the trailer for private use. The Committee thanks Colleen Wood who has been trailer warden since the purchase of the trailer.



News Items continued

Wesley Park Planting

Thanks to all who attended the preparatory day and then the initial planting day for Wesley Park Newham.

The idea behind the application to Council by Members of the Newham Garden Club (but auspice through NDLG) was the creation, within an existing public park, of a low maintenance 'waterwise' display garden. Apart from improving the parks environment, the garden would provide an important educational resource, particularly in regard to indigenous plants.

The Newham Garden Club wanted to develop an area of Wesley Park which was largely bare or weed infested. A planting map and guide was completed. This was designed by an acknowledged local indigenous plant expert and Landcare member Marie Marmara, of "Reminiscent Willandra Nursery".

The next step in the project was to prepare the ground, propagate and purchase plants, plant and mulch. Ongoing maintenance as well as the development of plant labels and an explanatory Notice Board was integral to the project plan.

Main goals of project:

- This project will develop a beautiful display of native plants indigenous to this area.
- The garden will provide an important educational resource.
- The garden will be a permanent reference point for those interested in using indigenous native plants in their own gardens.
- Due to the range and beauty of plants displayed it is expected the park will attract interest from those who previously had little knowledge or interest in local flora.
- To spread the pleasures of gardening and strengthen the sense of community in Newham.

A spring planting will complete the program but ongoing maintenance will be necessary.



Digging Doug—using high pressure water.



The ladies hard at work



Even the dog joined in—Good effort

News Items continued

CAN NEWHAM INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT POLICY?

The Victorian Green Paper on “Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate change” will develop into the White Paper of firm Government policy after all the submissions from the public have been weighed up and considered.

This firm policy will direct Government actions on the environment for the next 30 years or so.

That's why submissions from all concerned Victorians are important.

Many Newham Land carers will by now have sent in their submissions via the form sent to all members a few weeks ago – WELL DONE!

(The closing date was June the 30th.)

Also, our Landcare Group has made a formal submission representing the Group as a whole highlighting these main themes:

MONEY

We believe the Government has not faced the fact that a much bigger budget is necessary to arrest current environmental decline and loss of biodiversity.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Although the Dept. of Sustainability and Environment has achieved much, the burden of initiative in environmental conservation falls very much on volunteer groups.

We in Newham are proud of our program so far but we feel that **we are not fitting into a comprehensive, well thought-out total plan and direction for the environment.** It is hoped that the coming WHITE PAPER will develop such a comprehensive and far-sighted plan.

MORE TRAINED, PROFESSIONAL FACILITATORS

Volunteers have achieved a lot, but we must have more trained environmental specialists to guide and support us.

LANDSCAPE SCALE PLANNING/CONNECTIVITY

Here in Newham we have a growing awareness and appreciation of 'landscape units'. These go beyond property boundaries and make up a whole vista. Remnants of natural bushland, whether on public or private land, are connected ultimately into a **zone in which habitat can be preserved and biodiversity can flourish.** In the White Paper submission we have supported the idea of generous incentives from the public purse to encourage private landholders to link into 'connectivity' where appropriate. Our own “Campaspe-Maribryong-Headwaters-Biolink” is an example of connectivity which is being talked about in many places.

EXTEND THE NOTION OF LAND STEWARDSHIP. Where natural bush and high quality habitat exist on private land (perhaps where agricultural production is marginal) it is a great service to the **community as a whole** if this bushland is preserved and looked after.

So why shouldn't a landholder be PAID for such a service **by the community?**

This is a new concept to many, but it is of growing importance in areas like the Newham district where traditional agriculture is on the decline and 'lifestylers' want to do something positive with their land.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF PERI-URBAN AREAS. The control of weeds, pests and pets is a responsibility of people living in rural areas.

Many are newcomers, perhaps from an experience of city living, who need advice and guidance. In the submission we have mentioned the need for more resources to be put into education and enforcement of regulations which would help in the improvement of habitat and biodiversity.

(Jim Sansom, Committee member and contact person on “Land and Biodiversity” Green Paper)

Weedy matters

If you are feeling overwhelmed by the task of weed control, consider a 'labour exchange' with a similarly afflicted neighbour or hold a 'members session'. A successful work session was recently organized by members in Lavender Farm Road. Roadside broom was cleared using cut & paint techniques - it's amazing how much can be achieved by a group in the space of several hours! – and then we shared a wonderful meal, prepared by our hosts.

Special Feature

MEMBERS DID YOU KNOW?

Tree Guards

There have been many questions about wrappers and stakes for new plants. This is an important and expensive part of the planting process and deserves serious thought as to what is most effective given your long term planting program. Following are some of the issues and suggestions when planting forestry tube sized natives.

Why cover? The aim of the cover is primarily to reduce moisture loss through wind and direct sun. The cover achieves both aims, creating a micro-climate inside the wrapper. Also, wrappers prevent rabbit damage and may reduce damage by kangaroos and hares through reduced feeding access and stomping!

Types of covers

Wire frame and green wrapper. Easy to place except when ground is very hard or rocky. Expensive to purchase, but can be reused multiple times. We have wire frames in use which were bought 10 years ago – moving them to new plants every 12-18 months.

Corflute. These are easy to use but we have found they start to disintegrate after one season, so they are not as cheap as it first seems. Also, having only one stake means they can be easily rotated by high wind or animals great & small, uncovering the plant. Only suitable for small plants, not trees, because they are smaller than normal plastic covers

Bamboo. Only suitable in softer riparian zones. Even there they have a tendency to move and skew and lose the wrapper in wind. Single use only.

Hardwood stakes and wrapper. For rocky and hard areas. More effort to bash in 3 stakes, but they usually hold well. Generally single use only.

2 piece wire frame and wrapper. Good for larger plants in forgiving ground but not designed for weed mats (which only have 3 holes).

Milk Cartons. Are prima facie a cheap option. However my experience is that they are too small for most plants. Plants outgrow the carton before it is properly established or disintegrate too quickly and provide no protection from animals.

Weed mats

These are not essential if you have spot sprayed with herbicide, but will improve growth rates. Weeds compete with plant for moisture. Mats smother weeds and retain moisture. Jute is best because it degrades over 12-18 months. Recycled material is environmentally good but they do not degrade well and will inhibit the growth of clumping species.

So, if you are planning to plant over a number of years, I believe that the 3 sided metal frame with plastic cover is the most cost effective and efficient method to protect your new babies. Hardwood stakes being next best in hard ground or rocky areas. But, if you are doing a single planting in a protected riparian area then bamboo stakes are the cheapest way to go.

If you want to see/try/discuss the alternatives, please call. Hilary Roberts 5427 0795

Landcare Library

From the time the group was formed, in May 2004, until her recent move into Kyneton, Sally Stabback was our librarian and archivist. She did a wonderful job in setting up and managing these resources over a lengthy period, and we thank her for this effort.

The library is currently housed at the Robert household in Newham until a replacement librarian steps forward [ring Penny 5427 0795 to arrange a visit or to suggest an addition to the library].

Recent additions are copies of the following:-

‘Macedon Ranges Flora. A Photographic Guide to the Flora of the Barrm Birrm, Riddells Creek.’

Whilst there are variations in the flora of the Newham District and Riddells Creek, many of the 200 plants featured in this publication also occur in our area. Fantastic photos highlight distinguishing features.

‘Flora of Melbourne. A Guide to the Indigenous Plants of the Greater Melbourne Area.

A comprehensive text with line drawings and a limited number of colour images.

Upcoming Events

August

Friday 8th AGM / Ian Hunter, Wurundjeri Elder

Sat 16th Water quality at the Rock [FoHR]
10am at Hanging Rock Reserve

September

Sun 14th Bird walk & fauna R/v at the Rock [FoHR]
8am at Hanging Rock Reserve

Sat 20th Official Spring planting – E/v 9 site
10am 249 Dons Rd., Newham

October

Sat 11th Wesley Park planting

Sun 19th Lancefield Show – look out for the joint Landcare display

Details TBC Film & BBQ

Newham & District Landcare signs

A limited number of signs are available for you to declare your concern for the environment to your neighbours. Please contact Hilary Roberts on 5427 0795 [price \$15] to obtain your sign.

Fresh Editor Wanted

Due to my current commitments I would like to offer the role of editor to someone who enjoys turning the events associated with the N & DLG into a newsletter which I hope provides members with information about the group, highlights upcoming events, as well as providing some snap shots of members enjoying the community spirit. I would certainly appreciate anyone willing to take over the duty of preparing the monthly Newsletter. Much of the information is provided by other members and the editor just needs to put it all together. Please let the committee or myself know if you are interested in the role.—Paul Marmara

Your Current Committee

President: Penny Roberts [5427 0795] Secretary: Donald Lang
Treasurer: Hilary Roberts [5427 0795]

Committee Members

Arthur Clarke, Chris Wiggett, John Luckock, Fran Spain, Nick Massie & Jim Sansom

Please note that if any member wishes a copy of the Presidents Report, Treasurers Report or other items tabled at the AGM then they should contact the Secretary.

Members are invited to contact the committee on the contact numbers above on any issue.

The committee meets on the first Monday of the month [February to December] at 7.30 – 9 pm 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 timeand we enjoy them!!

Special interest groups

If you have any queries, or wish to contribute, please contact the person listed below.

Roadsides: Alice Aird [5427 0453] Sue Massie [5427 0065]

Seed bank/seed collection: Penny Roberts [5427 0795]

Newsletter items: Nick Massie [5427 0065]