

SPRING 2011
Newsletter No.30

Melbourne Water
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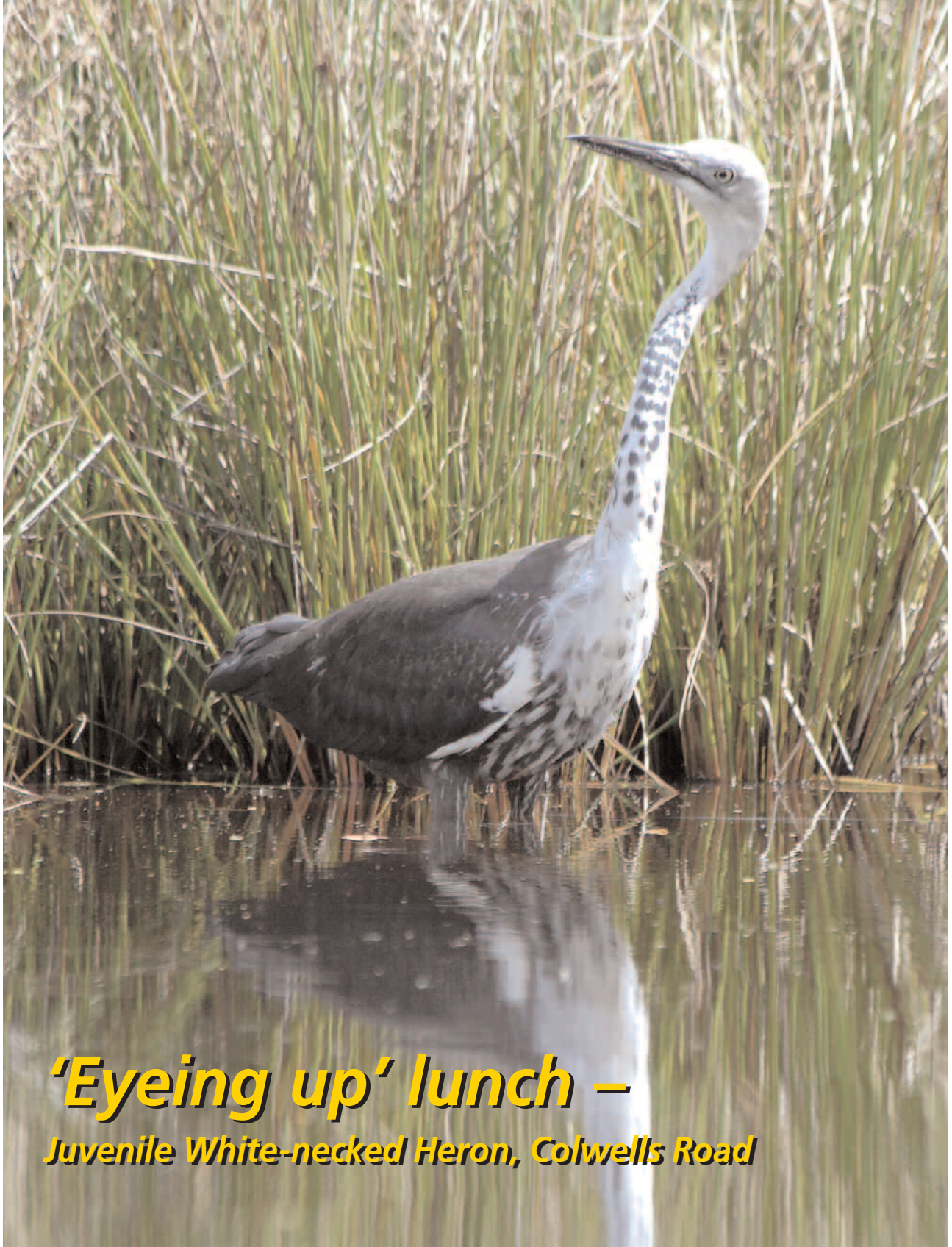


Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a
healthier environment

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442



**'Eyeing up' lunch –
Juvenile White-necked Heron, Colwells Road**

President's Message

This year marks two anniversaries for Landcare. The Grade 5 and 6 students at Newham Primary School have now been participating in the Waterwatch program for 5 years. All the data they collect from testing water from Deep Creek is sent to Melbourne Water, who collate it with information from other sites along the Maribyrnong River. As we are in the uppermost headwaters of the river, our creek gives a picture of the quality of the water as it enters the stream. Congratulations to all students who have contributed over the years.



2011 is also the 25th anniversary of the Landcare organisation. Landcare began in Victoria in 1986 with a group of farmers near St Arnaud in central Victoria forming the first Landcare group. Since then, hundreds of groups have formed across Victoria, including ours in 2004.

Happy birthday Landcare – everyone is invited to celebrate our part in the bigger organisation at our spring planting days or end of year barbeque.

Jenny Waugh

Group contacts

President: Jenny Waugh. **Vice President:** Penny Roberts. **Treasurer:** Hilary Roberts.

Committee members: Lorraine Rutherford, Helen Scott and Nick Massie.

Secretary: Fran Spain.

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

Roadsides: Sue Massie; 5427 0065.

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

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 22nd. *Wildflower walk*. . .

. . . in the fabulous Conglomerate Gully, led by Marie Marmara, a local expert.

Meet 9am at Newham Hall carpark to car pool. Walk 10am – 12 MD.

BYO thermos/drinks/snacks. Free.

This interesting loop walking track of about 3 km has been constructed by the local Shire in collaboration with "Friends of Conglomerate Gully". It features viewing platforms, a rustic "half-way" log/bark shelter hut, and interesting messmate and peppermint bushland.

The track is steep and rocky in parts and features some interesting wildflowers.

Contact: Fran Spain 5427 0661.

DECEMBER

Saturday 3rd. *End-of-year BBQ*

Wesley Park, from 6pm.

All the usual fun, including our 2 annual toss events (Wellie and Egg)

Meat/vegie options for the BBQ provided by Landcare.

RSVP to Penny 54270795 by November 30th.

BYO drinks and something for the shared table, also chair, plate/cutlery/glass etc.



2011 has been a quiet year to date, but we have some great things for the next year in the planning stage: Wild Action Zoo. Vox Bandicoot presenting "A Little Bush Magic". All about Platypus talk & walk.

Rainfall – not as much as it seems!

January and February gave us the highest recorded monthly rainfall in 30 years.

January 145mm – previous high – 1993 with 109mm

February 114mm – previous high – 2005 with 111mm

If October to December are average months, 2011 will be the second wettest year since 1996 (862mm), with 2011 (999mm) being the wettest year since 1993 (1042mm).

I don't know what this all means, other than we are not back to drought conditions yet.

Many of us still have plants dying of wet feet and have our gardening limited by soggy ground.

Plant Profile: Rose hyacinth-orchid

I discovered this beauty (*Dipodium roseumon*) on a roadside in Newham. There were four stately flower stems, of about 800mm height, amidst a mass of Red-anthered Wallaby Grass and a range of other small 'pretties' – too many to name. All this in a roadside no more than 3m wide and including Eucalypts and medium-sized Wattle trees.

This was a roadside that has never been mown, grazed or 'tidied up', that to many eyes would look a mess – containing a host of floral species and wildlife. This is what has been lost in so much of our Shire. If you still have remnant on your roadside, act as its guardian – value it, protect it and carefully deal with the weeds that appear within it.

The Rose Hyacinth-orchid is a leafless plant with a dark red stem appearing initially like an asparagus spear, rising to 900mm, with flowers massed along the upper half of the stem.



Equipment / plants

Extra Hamilton Planter for loan

Thank you to Deanne and Paul Muller for the donation of a Hamilton planter to the group. It is peak planting time now and our most used equipment is the Hamilton planters.

Folding wire frames

There are still several hundred folding wire frames available to members at \$1.65 each

TreeProject stock

The recent warm weather has resulted in a surge of growth in the Manna and Swamp Gum seedlings, meaning that another 50 or so of each are ready to plant.

Also still available are:

Tall Sedge [200] – great for drainage lines, banks and around dams to give shelter for water birds.

Tall tussock Grass [200] – the largest of the native tussocks, great for filtering run-off into streams or dams

Native mint – use in the same way as introduced species in cooking



CERES trip

The Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies, is an award winning, not-for-profit, sustainability centre located on a 4.5 hectare site along the Merri Creek in East Brunswick.

It is also a thriving community, an urban farm, Australia's largest deliverer of environmental education, an event and conference venue and a place rich with social and cultural diversity. It is also recognised as an international leader in community and environmental practice.

Built on a decommissioned rubbish tip that was once a bluestone quarry, today CERES is a vibrant eco-oasis with 350,000 visitors each year. Many more engage with it through the Sustainable Schools Program which takes sustainable education into schools across the State.

CERES's green technology displays, buildings, education and training programs and social enterprises (CERES's Organic Market, Café, Permaculture Nursery and Fair Food organics delivery) demonstrate food security, sustainable agriculture, energy efficiencies, renewables and water conservation in action.

These activities are directed to fulfilling their mission to:

- Address the causes of climate change
- Promote social wellbeing and connectedness
- Build local and global equity, and
- Embrace and facilitate rapid change.

Community groups such as the Bike Shed, Community Gardens and Chook Group all call CERES home and are part of its culture.

CERES is working towards making their site carbon neutral and is a model for a future where innovation, sustainability, equity and connectedness are central.

If anyone is interested in attending a Newham Landcare trip to CERES please contact Fran on 5427 0661.



PPWCMA Community Grant: Northern Hot-spots Project

The title of this project refers to hot-spots of biodiversity in the Campaspe-Maribyrnong Headwaters Biolink.

The 5 properties involved were selected because the landowners were willing and the proposed works made a significant contribution to the network of native vegetation being developed between Cobaw forest and Macedon Regional Park.

A 'members planting' was held at one of the sites on October 16th and the small crew of volunteers, along with the owner and members of his family, did an amazing job to get 450 plants in the ground!

The site, abutting a stretch of excellent roadside vegetation, has a stand of remnant Messmate, Peppermints and Candlebarks but no understorey. The aim was to introduce a broad range of under-storey plants – from grasses and small flowers to shrubs and small trees. In all, 22 species were re-introduced to the area.

A new Federal scheme has recently been announced that will provide funds for environmental works on an annual basis over a four year period. As with past Federal schemes, on-ground works contributing to the Biolink are suitable for including in an application. Any queries, or to register your interest in funding support, contact Penny on 5427 0795.



Protecting Biodiversity on your property

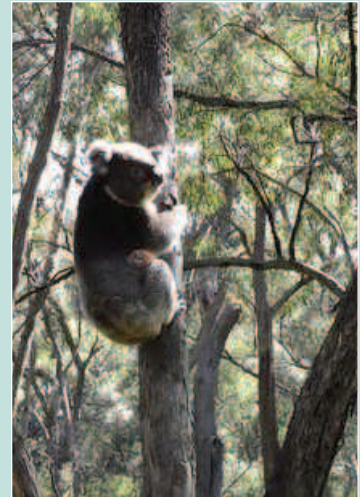
What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is short for biological diversity, and includes all plants, animals, micro-organisms and the ecosystems that support them.

So why is biodiversity so important?

All life, including humans, depends on healthy and functioning ecosystems to provide:

- a stable climate that ecosystems and in particular plants help to provide and maintain
- clean air, clean water and healthy soils
- protection from devastating and costly land degradation, such as salinity
- natural pest control and pollination for agricultural crops
- food, medicines timber and recreation



What are the main threats to biodiversity?

- climate change
- clearing and habitat fragmentation
- overgrazing
- weeds
- inappropriate fire regimes
- loss of hollow bearing trees
- loss of wetland habitats



What can you do to protect and enhance biodiversity on your property?

As a group landowners are a powerful force in shaping the future of biodiversity in the local landscape. Individually each landowner also has the opportunity to contribute in some way.

Actions include:

- avoid clearing native vegetation
- fence remnant vegetation to protect it from grazing livestock
- expand or improve the quality of existing remnant vegetation
- control feral pests such as cats, rabbits and foxes
- ensure domestic pets do not kill or injure wildlife
- control weeds
- leave fallen logs, large dead standing trees and rocky areas as they provide habitat for native animals

Article courtesy: Wombat Forestcare



Waterwatch in Newham

Salinity

Measuring the salinity of the water in Deep Creek is one of the tests done each month by Grade 5 and 6 students at Newham Primary School. Salt in the water conducts electricity – the more salt the better the conductivity. We therefore use an electrical conductivity meter to measure the salinity of the water.

The salinity of the water is important to the plants and animals that live in the creek, but is also important for stock that may drink the water.

Pigs and poultry tolerate salinity up to $700\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}^3$, horses 1000, beef cattle and adult dry sheep 1800. (Dep. of Agriculture – www.agrid.wa.gov.au)

Humans prefer water with a salt level of less than $800\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}^3$. Sea water has a salinity of $50,000\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}^3$

You can see from our data below that the water in Deep Creek is always well in the safe range for pond life and for stock.



Aliyah Moore testing the salinity of the pond water.

