

MERRI GROWLER

The Friends of Merri Creek Newsletter

February – April 2015

FRIENDS OF MERRI CREEK IS THE PROUD WINNER OF THE 2011 VICTORIAN URBAN LANDSCAPE AWARD

Results of 2014 Annual General Meeting

Twenty-seven members attended the FoMC Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 11 November 2014 and heard a most interesting talk about the early days of FoMC from Life Members, Ann and Bruce McGregor.

Ann and Bruce talked about their involvement with Merri Creek since May 1976, and showed some amazing 'before and after' photos.

They were involved in one of the first planting guides, published in 1980. This highlights a big difference between Council officers and the Friends: they come and go, whereas some of us are in for the long haul!

Over the years, FoMC has been involved in a number of large campaigns, such as: for the Merri Creek State Park north of the Western Ring Rd; against the F2 Freeway (when our membership peaked); against the gas pipeline at O'Herns Rd; and our current campaign to save biodiversity in the face of huge developments in the upper Merri.

During the presentation, there was a special appearance of the Growling Grass Frog (Wendy Moore) with an anti-freeway song, slightly revised for the East-West Link.

Everyone present was very impressed by the history and work of the group and our predecessors over the years.

The following members were elected to the 2015 Committee:

Office Bearers

President: David Redfearn

Vice-President: Ann McGregor

Secretary: Ray Radford

Treasurer: Nicole Lowe

Membership Secretary: Monica Williamson

Committee Members: Yasmin Kelsall & Nick Williams

The Committee remains the same as in 2014. However, if you're interested in becoming a Committee member in the future, you're welcome to see what we do by attending meetings and receiving Agendas (phone Ray on 0422 989 166 or email: merricreek@bigpond.com)

Sub-Committee Coordinators

Regeneration Group: Nicole Lowe

Litter Group: Paul Prentice

Streamteam: Irene Baker

Newsletter (layout): Dean Lombard

These coordinators remain the same as in 2014.

Representatives to MCMC

FoMC will again be represented on the Merri Creek Management Committee by Allie Dawe, Nicole Lowe, Ann McGregor, Pascale Pitot, Ann Sanson and Nick Williams.

Substitute Reps to MCMC

Yasmin Kelsall, Rebecca Mayo, David Redfearn, Suzi Shaw and Louise Wright remain as Substitute Representatives from 2014, while Ian Patrick has resigned and John Parham is new to the Committee. John was a planner at Northcote City Council around 1974 when the old Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works wanted to put a concrete wall on the east bank of Merri Creek downstream of Arthurton Rd, and he was instrumental in stopping this wall and creating the earthen levee bank instead.

Ray Radford Secretary

Members enjoying the McGregors' presentation at the FoMC AGM.



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President's Report 2014

Edited from the report given at the AGM on 11 November

It again gives me great pleasure as President to report to our membership and our community.

I extend hearty thanks to all members for their efforts during the year, especially Ray our efficient Secretary, and committee members with their valued input at meetings, including new ones who make us think about who we are and what we do.

As usual, the Secretary's Report (*see newsletter Nov 2014*) covers our activities very comprehensively, so I will comment only on other major issues of 2014.

Urban Growth Boundary expansion and threats to our biodiversity

As our members and supporters are all too aware, in 2012 Melbourne's northern urban growth boundary was expanded into the green wedges and around Wallan under the North Growth Corridor Plan, but the requisite Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was only released as a draft after other planning processes were well advanced. Worse still, the subsequent final version revealed even more scaled back protection of our grasslands and endangered fauna, so urban development is likely to cause local extinctions of several plant and animal species.

We have been advocating for many years for a conservation reserve network across the upper Merri catchment that would protect and sustain the wildlife, native wildflower grasslands, ancient River Red Gums, wetlands and waterways corridors. Sadly, our proposals and comments on the draft Growth Corridor Plan fell on deaf ears, as the State Government and the Growth Areas Authority proceeded regardless.

We made representations to government, and supported the continuing campaign of the Green Wedges Coalition to ensure that there was no compromise on the erosion of our Green Wedges; and there was some limited success in scaling back some of the worst of the changes.

I can't praise highly enough those partner organisations and individuals who were of tremendous support during this period; these being Luisa Macmillan and the MCMC team, the Victorian National Parks Association through Yasmin Kelsall, Matt Ruchel and Andrew Booth, the EDO (now Environment Justice Australia) through Felicity Millner and, of course, the Green Wedges Coalition through Rosemary West, who has been a tireless campaigner on these issues. Our own Ann McGregor also has given an enormous amount of time to this.

We have since been working closely with the MCMC to try and influence the Precinct Structure Plans which are the next level down from the more conceptual growth corridor plans, these being more detailed by comparison. The Precinct Structure Plans are being rolled out very rapidly, so we have to be very vigilant to ensure that we get the best possible outcomes, with priority areas adequately protected in the face of what has been a massive onslaught on our natural heritage.

Celebrating 25 years of achievement

To mark 25 years of activism on the creek, we are, in partnership with the MCMC and via funding from the Merri Creek Environment Fund and other sources, preparing a "before and after" photographic exhibition to show the very real achievements in restoring the Merri Creek environs: the tremendous partnership between volunteers, professionals, and government agencies, with enduring results. Watch out for publicity about the exhibition's travels through all the municipalities which border the creek.

Visit to Westgate Park

In May we were hosted by the Friends of Westgate Park and shown around this spectacular park, which sits under the Westgate Bridge and is partly bordered by the lower Yarra. We were shown the magnificent bushland created by the many volunteers, as well as the river frontage which is the gateway to the Port of Melbourne. It is an amazing slice of natural heritage in a very urban and industrial setting. Many thanks to Bruce McGregor for setting this up and to the Friends of Westgate Park for their warm hospitality and sharing their experiences. It is certainly very valuable for urban land carers to learn from each other.

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Merri Musings



Successful Grant Applications: We have kicked off the New Year by receiving the following grants, thanks to MCMC's Conservation Program Manager, Katrina Roberg:

\$49,810.15 from Communities For Nature for the project: *The Need for Seed*, to enhance remnant vegetation along the Merri Creek and establish genetically selected plantings of three depleted plants to act as 'seed orchards.'

\$20,000 from Melbourne Water River Health Incentives program for the project: *Koonda lat is where it's at*, to control weeds, restore habitat and engage the new residents of nearby apartments near the Koonda Lat bridge on the shared path in Northcote. Plus a \$1,000 Melbourne Water Group Support Grant for purchase of loppers, barbecue, hand mattocks, and admin support.

\$3,000 from Parks Victoria, through their Volunteer Group Long Service Award, for the project: *Celebrating Nature in our Native Grasslands - Cooper St Grassland*, for woody weed control, a bird talk, activity day, reptile display and barbecue.

\$1000 Donation: We received this generous donation from *The Grove Wholistic Centre for Spirituality Inc.*, which has ceased operating and distributed its remaining assets to organisations "that have purposes or values closely connected to those of *The Grove*."

It had been established in 1991 as a space where women could explore their spirituality, offering a diverse and affordable program of activities and events, including retreats, creative workshops, discussion groups and meditation courses, as well as counselling services, a clothing exchange and a library.

Following the sale of its building in 2012, the organisation was left without a permanent base; in winding it up, the remaining committee members were delighted to be able to contribute to the improvement of the creek and the local environment.

Poetry on the Merri: Radio National on 7 June 2014 broadcast the program *Poetica Spirit of Place: Genii Loci*, featuring John Anderson and his love of the Merri Creek and Red Gum forests. You can hear it at: http://mpegmedia.abc.net.au/rn/podcast/2014/06/pca_20140607_1505.mp3

Goodbye to FoMC office: We have now left the office at Brunswick Town Hall after at least 14 years, marking the end of a significant era for the group. Moreland City Council very generously allowed us to use the office initially for our high profile campaign against the F2 Freeway (now called the Craigieburn Bypass), when we had a paid coordinator for a while. However, after the campaign ended, Moreland Council allowed us to stay on.

After we couldn't find a replacement for Jack Svendsen as office coordinator, the office wasn't much used, which was just as well as in the last few years some leakage made it damp and unpleasant to work in. Moreland now wants to fix up the office for other purposes, so most of the FoMC Committee helped with a massive clean-out. All our freeway campaign material was donated to the State Library of Victoria, our office equipment and supplies are being re-used (mainly by MCMC), and everything else was either recycled or thrown out, except for some important files which are being held by the Secretary.

We also no longer have a landline, so contact us by email, or phone or text the Friends' Secretary, Ray Radford, on 0422 989 166.

Protecting the Upper Merri: Recently, FoMC has made three submissions to protect biodiversity from large scale development occurring in the upper Merri: to the Wallan Structure Plan; to the Craigieburn North Employment Area Precinct Structure Plan; and to the English Street Precinct Structure Plan and draft Amendment C183 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. Thank you to Yasmin Kelsall and Ann McGregor for putting these submissions together.

President's report 2014

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Challenges for 2015

This list is by no means exhaustive but I would see some of our key priorities for 2015 as being:

- Working with other groups, the community and government to ensure appropriate development along the whole of the Merri, but particularly in the upper Merri, and to secure the protection of sites of environmental significance;
- Continued support for the community campaign against the redevelopment of the Brunswick Terminal Station;

- A continued commitment to the good governance and the operations of the MCMC;
- Exploring opportunities to further educate and engage our community in the values of the creek and its environs;
- Engaging and building the capacity of our membership, the next generation and succession planning;
- Celebrating our successes.

David Redfearn OAM President 2014

Wild life on the Merri – episode 3

The final chapter on the fauna in these interviews from the Merri Creek Oral History Project deals with skinks, lizards and introduced animals.

Lizards have perhaps survived better than frogs along the Creek, being less dependent on water quality. Brendan Casey's interest in frogs and lizards was inspired by an early experience in his Fawkner boyhood. "When I was young, when I was very young, my brother came home with a bearded dragon, and somehow it imprinted itself on me. I was absolutely fascinated by reptiles and amphibians ever since." From his later studies of skinks and lizards, he describes the variety. "The main ones are the Cunningham's Skink which live in colonies, there were huge colonies of them of all different aged classes. There were a lot of Eastern Blue-tongues, Golden Water Skinks which were very common around Fawkner. There were massive numbers of them, they were just everywhere. Striped Skinks, skinks I called Grass Skinks, Weasel Skinks, Shortlimbed Skinks. I think at one point I identified nine different species of skinks.

"The Cunningham Skinks grow to about 45 centimetres. The little ones are spectacular animals, they have a dark appearance with white spots all over them. They have keeled scales, they sun themselves on faces of the basalt, so when you approach them they dive into crevices and then they inflate their bodies so their scales point the opposite way to how you would force them out. They were pretty impossible to remove from the crevices. That's part of the reason they have been able to hang on for so long... They completely dominated those escarpments... The Water Skinks lived on the rocks along the Creek, the Blue-tongues would just sort of wander around the place and sun themselves on the rocks along the Creek. Each skink species occupied a different niche. So if we wanted to find a Striped Skink for example, we would go down there and look for rocks embedded in the soil that had the little tell-tale burrow, and you would lift them up and there would be a big Striped Skink under there. If we wanted to find Blue-tongues, we would just wander around the tussocks, and we'd stumble across them.

"There were little skinks darting through the tussocks everywhere...the Cunningham Skinks very much live in family groups, you would go there and you'd see this year's live-born young, then you'd see last year's live-born young slightly larger, and then maybe ones from a couple of seasons ago. And then you'd get the full-grown ones in the one group living together. I don't know if they were the one family but in one crevice for example, you could find maybe between ten and twenty skinks of different sizes. And in another crevice ten metres away, would be another family group of all different sizes, but whether they lived in their own family group or mingled I don't know. But certainly it appeared to be mum, dad and the kids, with teenagers and that sort of stuff. They were the only lizards that appeared like that. Blue-tongues were always solitary animals. The Water Skinks would live in small groups, but you didn't really see different age classes together. My favourite skink was probably the Blue-tongue, because they were such an impressive animal. And you could actually pick them up. They would puff themselves up and make a hissing noise, but it was just something for a small child to pick up an enormous Blue-tongue lizard and be able to hold it."

The survival rate of different skink species has varied. Brendan finds there are still plenty of skinks around Galada Tamboore, the Water Skink has disappeared completely south of Mahoneys Road because of the water quality, there are still plenty of Striped Skinks in the Craigieburn Grasslands, but many skinks fall victim to loss of habitat and habitat modification. Skinks at the Gowrie marshlands disappeared, as did the frogs, and at some point in the 70's an escarpment on the Merri was buried in soil, which also buried the skinks.

Those who visited the Creek when young took little notice of the bird species, but John Jordan remembers sparrows, crows, magpies, kingfishers and cranes. And there were always ducks. Introduced species such as rabbits and foxes

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*Cunningham Skink, *Egernia cunninghamii*. Photo: from MCMC files.*



Dick's Witticisms

Some more witty one-liners from FoMC Life Member, Dick Harcourt:

Too much of a good thing is wonderful.

The decision is maybe and that's final.

Hamlet is just a bunch of quotations strung together.

The Murnong Gathering

Thanks to a \$5000 grant from Moreland City Council's Celebrating Place Grants Program, the Merri and Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group (MECCARG) was able to stage another successful Murnong Gathering on Saturday 8 November 2014 at the old Pentridge quarry site.

About 90 people were Welcomed to Country by Wurundjeri Elders Auntie Di Kerr and Uncle Bill Nicholson, and invited to join them in celebrating their cultural heritage. Uncle Bill told stories about the history of the Wurundjeri, how they used the natural resources of the area, and the changes since settlement.

This year saw the return of the dance troupe and didgeridoo player, and at the end of the dancing everyone was invited to join in and learn how to dance. To mark our coming together, everyone made ochre hand prints on the quarry wall. Auntie Di then led a group of women

to where the Murnong grow and showed how to harvest them using a traditional digging stick.

Bush toy workshops were run throughout the day by Adrienne Kneebone, and proved to be a popular fun activity, resulting in some interesting creations. Murnong and lilies, cooked in earth ovens, tasted like roasted parsnip and sweet potato. There was also a bush tucker barbeque with Emu, Kangaroo and Crocodile, run by Dave Wandin and MCMC. To see more photos go to MECCARG on Facebook.

Melissa Laing MECCARG

Dance class at MECCARG's Murnong Gathering on 8 November 2014

Holy Sites Tour of the Merri Catchment (No. 2) Thursday 26 March

Don't miss this second tour. This time, FoMC Life Member Bruce McGregor will take us to Thomastown Lutheran Church (1856), one of the oldest in the Merri catchment, and the Preston Mosque. Car pool available at the MCMC office, Lee St, East Brunswick, 1.00pm. Tour ends at 5.00pm. Registration necessary by 18/3 with Ray Radford at MCMC at: ray@mcmc.org.au



Wildlife on the Merri – episode 3

found the Creek a haven, and John and his dog would go rabbiting in the stone walls that had been built along the Creek. Of more commercial value, cows and horses were kept on Hall Reserve. Mick Graham relates how “there were green parts where they used to bring their horses from the stables which were around the back in Clifton Street. These horses were for jinkers that were used for transport in the 30's. There was no work at the weekends so they put the horses down there...then Sunday night they would go down and bring them back to the stables and they were ready for next morning.” The cow was kept by an Esplanade family with many children to provide milk to the household.

On a larger scale, McKays dairy ran their cows all along the Creek up to Coburg Lake. And keeping horses on paddocks was common. Some were working horses in a time when horses and carts were still used, but others were hobby horses just “plonked.” Bill Berry had many horses, he explained how “you could go to the Newmarket sale yards, and pick up a half-broken brumby for five bob (shillings). Well it was half broken and you would still have to get it home, and we didn't truck them, we rode from Newmarket... If someone had a paddock and they wanted it chewed down, you just asked them if you could put your horse in.”

Brendan Casey reflects that “it is sad what we have done to the Creek in our generation. But really, volunteers from

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Friends of Merri Creek are the encouragement to keep trying, clearly not everyone's given up on it. And I certainly haven't. So I think the Creek can be salvaged back to what it was, all we have to do is to provide the opportunity for the Creek to do so, clean up the water going into the Creek, keep going with the revegetation, remove the weeds, and tell people to lock their cats up, things like that.”

Des & Ruth Shiel

(Editor's note: Brendan Casey is the person who discovered Growling Grass Frogs in Merri Creek.)

Our Facebook page now has over 500 friends

If you haven't already done so, check out our wonderful Facebook page, we're sure you'll 'like' it. Just point your web browser toward www.facebook.com/FriendsofMerriCreek and click on 'Like' to get automatic updates to group activities and news.

Post & win: We love your Merri Creek stories, so we are now offering a free bird book for the best post to our Facebook page each month.

And we're on Instagram too

Smartphone users with the Instagram app can now share photos with #merricreek #merricreektrail hashtags at Instagram @friendsofmerricreek

Birds along the Merri in true spring

Our bird surveys in November 2014 recorded a total of 78 species across ten sites. The most common species were Red Wattlebird (198), Rainbow Lorikeet (140), Common Myna (124) and Common Starling (110). Australian Magpies, Common Blackbirds and Common Mynas were recorded at every site. Pacific Black Ducks, Spotted Doves, Red Wattlebirds, Little Ravens, Magpie-larks, Welcome Swallows, and Common Starlings were recorded at nine survey sites. On the other hand, 23 species were each recorded at only one site. The Australian Reed-Warbler is one of our vocal spring-summer migrants, and was reported at 7 sites.

In 2013, the mild weather through spring encouraged a prolonged breeding season, and seven species were recorded as nesting. In 2014 only two species were reported as nesting. White-faced Herons were nesting in a tall gum tree north of Coburg Lake, and Willie Wagtails had two young in a nest over the Merri in East Brunswick (see photo).

A Willie Wagtail feeds nestlings over Merri Creek between East Brunswick and Northcote Golf Course. Photo: Bruce McGregor.



This tortoise was seen near the Willie Wagtails' nest on 12-11-14, three days after the November bird survey. The nesting Willie Wagtails came over to chase the tortoise away. Photo: Bruce McGregor.

The site with the greatest number of species was Galgi Ngarrk / Craigieburn Grasslands (38), with 33 species at Coburg Lake Reserve and Blyth Street-Moreland Road East Brunswick, and 32 at Edwardes Lake. In Hall Reserve, Clifton Hill, the most numerous species was Noisy Miner. Their predominance is a likely reason for the relatively low species diversity at this site (21 species).

A possible Spotted Crake was heard at Galgi Ngarrk, but the identification was not certain. Native grassland flowers including Chocolate Lily, Veronica and Blushing Bindweed were appreciated at Galgi Ngarrk. Two Growling Grass Frogs were also recorded there.

At Bababi Djinanang (Jukes Road Fawkner), a quiet Rufous Songlark was flushed from the ground, probably a female. A male has a loud territorial display song, which has not been heard at this site so far this season.

A female Ringtail Possum with two young were seen on the East Coburg-West Preston survey.

Ann McGregor Birdwatch Coordinator

First Merri Birdwatch survey for 2015

Bird surveys will be held from 8.45–10.30am at ten sites along Merri Creek as listed below. Beginners welcome, BYO binoculars if possible, but no dogs please, as they reduce the number and variety of birds to be seen. The contact for all Birdwatch events is Ann McGregor 0429 386 102.

Free leaflets on Merri Birds (normally \$2) are available for all participants

Surveys at the following nine sites are on 15 February and 17 May

- Bababi Djinanang (Jukes Rd Grasslands), Fawkner:** Meet on the Merri Path at the end of Jukes Road, Fawkner (Melway 18 A2).
- Egan Reserve – Harding Street – Strettle Reserve – Normanby Avenue:** Meet at the bluestone steps at the end of The Grove, East Coburg (Melway 30 A3).
- Coburg Lake Reserve:** Meet near the car park, Lake Grove, Coburg (Melway 17 H10).
- Edwardes Lake:** Meet at the playground adjacent to Griffiths Street, Reservoir (Melway 18 E5).

CERES – Moreland Road: Meet at the seats on the Merri Path at rear of CERES, East Brunswick (Melway 30 B7).

Merri Park and Phillips Reserve: Meet at the end of Victoria Street, East Brunswick, at the BBQ shelter (Melway 30 B8).

Hall Reserve – Yarra Bend Park: Meet at the Rotunda, Hall Reserve, Clifton Hill (Melway 2D D1).

Galgi Ngaark (Craigieburn Grasslands): Meet at O'Herns Road gate off Hume Highway, Somerton (Melway 180 E6).

Galada Tamboore: Meet at the end of Hatty Court, Campbellfield (Melway 7 K6).

Surveys at Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands) are on 22 February and 24 May

Meet near the Istrian Club, Cooper Street, Campbellfield (Melway 180 K10).

Friends of Edgars Creek Focus

I would like to start the FoEC Focus by offering my belated season's greetings to all readers of the 'Growler. I hope that 2015 is a year of prosperity and good growth for you all; also for everything you have planted and those things you will plant in the coming year.

As we move forward into 2015 I would like to reflect on the success of the FoEC 2012-14 strategic plan; a document that has guided our revegetation and lobbying efforts for the past three years. Our 2015-17 vision is receiving its final touches, though I would like to take some time to highlight the key areas of focus for FoEC over the next three years.

In a major development for both the Edgars and Merri Creeks, Moreland City Council is currently engaged in the process of developing detailed designs for a constructed wetland in the Merri and Edgars Creek parkland (the old golf driving range) close to the confluence of our creeks. Construction of the wetland is anticipated to occur in 2015/2016, and as a stakeholder FoEC will be advocating for the best possible outcomes for the creek reserve with a focus on habitat creation, revegetation opportunities and improved amenity and access to the wetlands area.

The Coburg Hill development (the former Kodak site) is continuing towards the later stages of the project and this is bringing construction of roads and housing ever closer to the creek reserve. A sedimentation pond is now nearing completion on the site of former Melbourne Water land adjacent to the Kodak bridge (within the Coburg Hill boundaries), and FoEC has continued to work with the developer Satterley Group Pty Ltd to advocate for our perceived best possible outcomes, as the estate begins to formally interface with the creek reserve.

Our core work remains our strongest focus – revegetation. We are thankful to Satterley for their continued support of our mission, with FoEC being successful in obtaining support for planting projects across the period of our 2015-2017 strategic plan. We will continue to concentrate our efforts on enhancing the sites which we have already put so much time and effort into – we now have five major sites for our revegetation works; the Gooseneck meander, Silurian cliff, ephemeral waterholes atop the escarpment, the Ronald St footbridge area and the caravan park site. Our calendars over the next three years will rotate projects across these key sites. Our full calendar for 2015 will soon be available on our website www.foec.org.au – also see the back page.

You can also follow us on Facebook for handy reminder prompts on planting events throughout the year.

I look forward to seeing you on the creek!

David Pavone President, Friends of Edgars Creek



The Caravan Park site heading towards dusk with a nice flow coming down the creek. This beautiful escarpment was covered in cascading kikuyu only two years ago. Indigenous ferns and salt bushes have been introduced into the escarpment and will gradually form a more desirable cascading effect.

Saved!

The nightmare seems to be over, thanks in no small part to a most felicitous piece of timing... The case brought by Moreland and Yarra Councils against the validity of the East-West Link was to be heard just two weeks after Daniel Andrews' sweeping election victory, enabling him to declare that he as Premier would not contest it; so the contracts will be cancelled, homes and parkland spared, and an estimated \$17.8 billion in total cost avoided (compensation of \$1.1 billion possibly payable). Congratulations and thanks to all those activists, including Councillors.

Thus ends one of the most secretive, sinister episodes in Victoria's political history. The Coalition had said nothing about the motorway in 2010, only public transport, yet signed for it before this year's election – unlike John Howard's frank warning of his GST plan ahead of the 1998 poll. The supposed

justification for the project used figures and methods that were never released, and the Planning Minister actually insisted that he did not want to know about them when authorising it! as if they were irrelevant, or none of his business!

And what contempt he showed for Victoria's heritage (and citizens), in placing the 150-year-old Royal Park on the register but stipulating that this would not protect it from damage by the tollway constructors... Meanwhile the Prime Minister tried to use three billion dollars of *our* tax money to advance his pro-roads, anti-P.T. agenda, even seeking to persuade the new Premier to start his term of office by breaking his promise to the electorate, as if this was common practice. Not to Mr Andrews, it wasn't.

Paul Prentice

FEBRUARY

EVENTS

APRIL

Sunday 1: Litter Clean Up – Coburg

Bell St Coburg, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 A1. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 1: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Saturday 7: MECCARG* Site Maintenance

Meet at the Merri path south of Murray Rd bridge Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone Mel 0404 043 010.

Sunday 15: 1st Bird Survey for 2015

9 sites along the Merri. See page 6 for details.

Sunday 22: 1st Bird survey for 2015 at Bababi Marning

See page 6 for details.

Sunday 22: Merri's Magical Morning

Merri Park, Northcote, Sumner Ave near Traill St, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 C8. There will be a walk-in butterfly enclosure, water bug projection art, weaving with local plants, face painting, coffee van and more. Contact Jane at jane@mcmc.org.au or 9380 8199.

Thursday 26: Outdoor Frog Cinema

Edwardes Lake Park Reservoir, 7.30pm. Bring a picnic rug or deck chair and enjoy the quirky documentary about Australia's most invasive amphibian, *Cane Toads: The Conquest*, while listening to our local frogs calling at the nearby wetlands. Contact Jane at jane@mcmc.org.au or 9380 8199.

MARCH

Sunday 1: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 1: Sydney Road Street Party

Sydney Road Brunswick, 12noon-7pm. Help staff the FoMC stall near Brunswick Town Hall — ring Ray on 0422 989 166.

Sunday 1: Clean Up Australia Day at Merri Park Wetland, Northcote

Sumner Avenue Northcote, 10-11.30am. Details at: <http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/Merri+Park+Wetland>

Saturday 7: MECCARG* Site Maintenance

Meet at the Merri path south of Murray Rd bridge Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone Mel 0404 043 010.

Sunday 8: Litter Clean Up – Fawkner

Moomba Park, off north end of McBryde St Fawkner, 10am-12noon. Melway 8 A12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Saturday 14: Summer Loving Weed Workshop

Merri Park, Northcote, off Winifred St near Sumner Ave, 1.30-3.30pm. Melway 30 C8. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Thursday 26: Holy Sites Tour of the Merri Catchment (No. 2)

Visit Thomastown Lutheran Church (1856), one of the oldest in the Merri catchment, and the Preston Mosque, with FoMC Life Member Bruce McGregor. Car pool available at the MCMC office, Lee St, East Brunswick, 1.00pm. Tour ends at 5.00pm. Registration necessary by 18/3 with Ray Radford at MCMC at: ray@mcmc.org.au

Sunday 29: 1st of 5 woody weed control Block B Bababi Marning

The first of five days to rid block B of Broom, Gorse and Briar Rose bushes. Light refreshments provided. Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands). Meet at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit (Road Runner factory), in between Transit Drive and Connection Drive Campbellfield, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 180 K12 — park on the factory side and check the *No Parking* signs. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

Saturday 4: MECCARG* Easter Site Maintenance

Meet at the Merri path south of Murray Rd bridge Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone Mel 0404 043 010.

Sunday 5: Litter Clean Up – North Fitzroy

Near Rushall Railway Station Nth Fitzroy, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 D11. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 5: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 12: Weeding at Strettle Wetland

Friends of Merri Creek site near Strettle Wetland Thornbury, 10am-12.30 pm. Melway 30 B3. Help look after the site managed by the Friends with the support of the Darebin Bush Crew. Light refreshments afterwards. Phone Suzi 0403 595 466.

Sunday 19: 2nd of 5 woody weed control Block B Bababi Marning

The second of five days to rid block B of Broom, Gorse and Briar Rose bushes. Light refreshments provided. Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands). Meet at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit (Road Runner factory), in between Transit Drive and Connection Drive Campbellfield, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 180 K12 — park on the factory side and check the *No Parking* signs. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

Sunday 19: Friends of Edgars Creek Silurian Cliff site Planting

Planting extension at the old willows area below the escarpment, east side of the creek, Ronald St North Coburg, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A9. Funded by Melbourne Water Community Grant. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

MAY

Saturday 2: MECCARG* Site Maintenance

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Phone Mel 0404 043 010.

Saturday 2: Summer Loving Weed Workshop

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, Sumner Ave near Traill St, 1.30-3.30pm. Melway 30 C8, follow the flags. Help rejuvenate Merri Park. Funded by Communities for Nature. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 3: Litter Clean Up – Reservoir

Ngarri-djarrang (Central Creek Grassland) near Davidson St Reservoir, 10am-12noon. Melway 8 B12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 3: Streamteam Water Quality Testing

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

Sunday 10: Mother's Day Planting & BBQ

Lorne St Fawkner, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 18 A5. Bring your mum along and help Mother Earth. Funded by the Merri Creek Environment Fund and Moreland City Council. Phone Ray or Monica at MCMC 9380 8199.



Friends of Merri Creek Inc.

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