

Merri News

MAY 2009

Newsletter of Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) 2 Lee St East Brunswick VIC 3057

Merri Creek 'highly commended' as a top ecological project

The restoration of the Merri Creek corridor has been highly commended among a selection of outstanding ecological restoration projects in Australia and New Zealand.

The 18-month search for the top projects was initiated by *Ecological Management & Restoration*, the journal of the Ecological Society of Australia, and the Society for Ecological Restoration International.

Restoration works in the Merri Creek corridor over the last 20 years have resulted in significant amenity and habitat improvements. Typical works involve the control of high priority weeds in the better remnant areas and strategic revegetation to create habitat links between those remnant areas. Restoration also includes specific habitat or conservation-directed plantings, for example establishing shrub habitat for Thornbills and other small birds.

The restoration of Merri Creek has clearly improved habitat values for a number of faunal species. Twenty-three species of birds that were not recorded in a 1993 fauna survey of Merri Creek have since been sighted in the Creek environs, many utilising habitat in revegetation plantings. Other species appear to have expanded their range. Also, more indigenous bird species have been found in restored sites than in larger unrestored areas along Merri Creek. In 2007 a Splendid Skipper Butterfly turned up at a planting in Brunswick, several kilometres from remnant patches of its caterpillar foodplant. This individual or its ancestors probably followed 'stepping stones' of similar plantings along Merri Creek. The more frequent reports of Swamp Wallabies and Echidnas may also reflect this increasingly effective 'habitat corridor' through urban areas.

Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) works in partnership with community and agencies from Wallan township, near Merri Creek's headwaters, to the creek's confluence with the Yarra River, 5km from Melbourne CBD. MCMC also endeavours to ensure consistency with other works adjoining the Merri Creek by commenting on planning applications, restoration works proposals, and strategic and management plans.

MCMC has produced a report on the restoration of Critically Endangered Grasslands at Ngarri djarrang (Central Creek Grassland) as an example of the restoration we undertake.

You can see this report on our website: www.mcmc.org.au

The successful restoration of Ngarri djarrang Native Grassland provides a vivid example of what is possible. The project's challenges include controlling weeds amongst native grasses and carrying out regular ecological burns in an area surrounded by residential housing.

See all the top projects in Australia at the website:

www.globalrestorationnetwork.org/countries/australianew-zealand/australia



The photos show Ngarri djarrang (Central Creek Grassland) in July 2005 (top) and after restoration in September 2008 (bottom). The newly built house shows how close the grassland is to housing.

You can contribute to the restoration of this critically endangered grassland by coming along to the event below.

Community Planting, and free barbecue*
Saturday 27 June, from 10am-1pm
Ngarri djarrang (Central Creek Grassland)
Davidson St Reservoir (Melway map 8 B12)

* The free barbecue has Halal and vegetarian options.

New information notes

MCMC has summarised four long term restoration projects in attractive full colour *Information Notes*: Merri Park Wetland in Northcote, Rushwood Drive Reserve in Craigieburn, Moomba Park in Fawkner, and Rotunda Wetland in Clifton Hill. Each note outlines the environmental history, cultural and ecological values of a site and the partners involved in its restoration. For copies see www.mcmc.org.au or contact the MCMC office.



Upper Merri under threat

Late last year the state government announced its proposal to extend Melbourne's urban growth boundary. The upper Merri catchment is one of the areas being investigated for future urban growth – residential, business and industrial areas and a large new inter-modal freight terminal (rail-road).

In response MCMC has prepared the **Upper Merri Biodiversity Network Plan**. The Plan focuses on high priority areas for protection from development. It brings together information on existing conservation reserves, important but as yet unprotected biodiversity areas, and waterways, floodplains and former wetlands. It also identifies existing and potential habitat corridors to ensure good habitat connectivity. The Plan is summarised in a map of the proposed network. Check out the news item on MCMC's website at: www.mcmc.org.au.

You can help to protect biodiversity in the upper Merri by making a submission on the Draft Urban Growth Boundary, expected to be released in May/June. See the Growth Areas Authority website at www.gaa.vic.gov.au/. Feel free to use the key points and any of the information from our Biodiversity Network Plan in your submission.

Views on Galada Tamboore

Galada Tamboore,* a fabulous but little known part of the Merri Creek parklands north of the Western Ring Road, is the focus of Parks Victoria planning for a major new Merri Creek park. On behalf of Parks Victoria, MCMC is helping to gain an understanding of local community views of the area. We are taking groups on guided walks of the diverse and beautiful gorge area of Galada Tamboore and conducting a structured evaluation of their visitor experience.

The first walk, in early April, was by torch and moonlight with a youth group of 30 people aged between 15 to 25 years from the Our Lady Guardian of Plants Chaldean Church in Campbellfield. To our delight, many of the group had visited the site before. Those who hadn't were amazed at how close this large natural area is to them.

You too can have an input into Parks Victoria's master plan for Galada Tamboore, which is expected to be released in June – check the Parks Victoria website for more information, www.parks.vic.gov.au.

For access to the area, enter via Hatty Court, Campbellfield, or from the Whittlesea Gardens in Thomastown.

* Galada Tamboore is Wurundjeri for 'stream waterhole.'

Photo: MCMC takes visitors on a guided walk at Galada Tamboore.

Bushfire condolences and help

MCMC offers sincere condolences to all those who have been adversely affected by the recent devastating bushfires, especially those who have lost loved ones.

We recognise that many organisations are involved in bushfire control and relief and we particularly acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our Council members, their staff and their communities.

MCMC has allocated the equivalent of \$20,000 in staff time to be used to support carefully planned recovery projects, such as waterway stabilisation and protection, in nearby affected areas. These projects will be undertaken in conjunction with appropriate authorities, local Landcare and Friends groups.

The Merri Creek Environment Fund

The Merri Creek Environment Fund is seeking donations for revegetation and conservation works in the Merri Creek catchment. *Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.* Please make cheques out to Merri Creek Environment Fund and send to MCMC, 2 Lee Street, East Brunswick, 3057, or drop in a cash donation (sorry, no credit card facilities) or contact us to arrange a direct deposit.

Our 20th Anniversary celebrations

To celebrate MCMC's 20th Anniversary this year we are holding two main events to which everyone is invited:

Photographic exhibition by David Tatnall: Synergy Gallery, 253 High St Northcote, from 10th to 29th August. MCMC is sponsoring this photographic exhibition of the spectacular Galada Tamboore area by David Tatnall, renowned for his luminous images of the Australian landscape. See his website: www.davidtatnall.com.

20th Anniversary Planting & Free Barbecue: Sunday 16 August, near Rushall Station, Nth Fitzroy, 10am-1pm (Melway 30 D12). Join in this BIG planting, and free barbecue with vegetarian and halal options. Funded by an Australian Government 'Caring for our Country' grant.

For upcoming community events and the 2007-2008 MCMC Annual Report, see the MCMC website: www.mcmc.org.au

Merri Creek Management Committee produces these quarterly newsletters for the wider community in the Merri Creek catchment. You can download this in colour from our website (see below) or contact Ray Radford for a hardcopy at:

Merri Creek Management Committee 2 Lee St East Brunswick VIC 3057. Phone: 9380 8199 Fax 9380 6989

Email: admin@mcmc.org.au Website: www.mcmc.org.au