

Merri News

NOVEMBER 2008

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

Draft Merri Creek & Environs Strategy is out for public comment



MCMC has released a bright new draft strategy for the waterways of the Merri Catchment and is inviting comments from the public. The *Merri Creek and Environs Strategy* aims to protect the natural and cultural features of the waterway corridors, from the headwaters north of Wallan to Merri Creek's junction with the Yarra River.

The strategy provides a wealth of information about the Merri waterways, as well as highlighting issues and setting objectives, targets and actions to achieve healthy living streams, fauna habitat and open space havens.

Copies of the strategy can be read at most libraries in the catchment, where feedback sheets are also available. It can also be viewed or downloaded from the MCMC website at www.mcmc.org.au/mces Limited hard copies also available.

The deadline for public comment is November 15.

Photo: Merri Creek at Galada Tamboore.



Stream health alert!

During September and October, MCMC formed a special Stream Health Team to work in partnership with Environment Protection Authority (EPA) officers from the Yarra River Investigation and Response Program. Together, almost 100 workplaces were visited in an industrial area in West Heidelberg. Stormwater runoff from this area into Darebin Creek is a known pollution 'hotspot'.

The key goal of the project was to educate people in workplaces about the potential pollution risks to stream health from workplace practices. The Stream Health Team (*pictured*) comprised Karen Borton and Julia Vanderood from *Waterwatch* in Banyule and MCMC's Greg Woodward and Jane Bevelander. The project is funded by EPA Victoria.

For upcoming community events see the events calendar on the MCMC website:

www.mcmc.org.au

Staff member wins Award

Congratulations to MCMC Senior Technical Officer, Brian Bainbridge, on winning the 2008 Port Phillip & Western Port Landcare 'Caring for Community Groups' Award.

Brian's success was because he has developed a wide range of publications, plans, educational and interpretive materials and conducted many "walks and talks" and workshops. He possesses a superb knowledge of local flora, fauna, restoration ecology, impressive artistic skills and a commitment to share his knowledge with the community. He rediscovered the Golden Sun Moth in Craigieburn Grasslands and inspired findings at other grassland sites. He has provided expert knowledge to many community groups which has helped to empower them. He conducted successful weed workshops and works with local groups from diverse cultural backgrounds on innovative environmental engagement projects.



Photo: Well known actor, Kerrie Armstrong, presents Brian Bainbridge with his 'Caring for Community Groups' Award.



Grants for new projects

The restoration of endangered vegetation communities in the Merri Catchment will get a boost from a new \$100,000 grant received by MCMC. Vegetation quality will be assessed and vegetation restored at ten important Grassland, Escarpment and Riparian sites, from near Rushall Station in Clifton Hill to the Beveridge-Wallan Railway in the north of the catchment. The project will undertake weed management, biomass reduction and planting works to strengthen buffers, expand site boundaries and promote ecosystem resilience. The Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority secured the funding from the Federal Government's *Caring for our Country* program.

In partnership with MCMC, Friends of Merri Creek has gained \$11,454 from Parks Victoria for works at two Grassland Reserves: *Bababi marning** (mother's hand) - Cooper St; and *Galgi ngarrk** (back bone) - Craigieburn. The projects will continue woody weed management and host two *Wild Discoveries* walks including bird surveys, a community Kangaroo Grass seed harvest, and two Golden Sun Moth surveys. Check the MCMC website and put these opportunities to visit Nationally Threatened Victorian Volcanic Plains Grasslands into your diary.

**Wurundjeri names provided by Doreen Garvey-Wandin.*

Photo: NMIT students learn and contribute to regeneration works at Robinson Reserve, Preston. Project funded by SP AusNet through Landcare Australia.

Merri restoration 07-08

- ♥ MCMC's Parkland Team hosted 61 community events including planting, weeding, jute laying and mulching days, workshops and tours (including 'safaris') for residents, Friends, community and corporate groups.
- ♥ MCMC planted 41,340 plants. 82% were ground storey and 11% were semi-aquatic species. Lately, more of our plantings have been drought-tolerant species.
- ♥ Volunteers contributed 5,994 hours, valued at \$179,820, to restoration of the Merri Creek and its tributaries. Corporate groups spent 1,514 of these hours planting, weeding and mulching for the Merri.
- ♥ MCMC's Parkland Team supported 350 students from 11 education institutions to learn about the ecology and management of the Merri Creek environs.
- ♥ MCMC's Catchment Program held 251 sessions with 2420 participants.
- ♥ *Waterwatch* held 276 sessions with 6139 participants.
- ♥ MCMC supported three work experience students and hosted four volunteers, most doing work placements.



2008 "River Tapestries"

MCMC contributed to a magnificent 16 piece mural featured at the 2008 *Riversymposium* in Brisbane. The "River Tapestries" commemorates the tenth anniversary of the Theiss *Riverprize* (won by MCMC in 2002). The Merri Creek contribution (above) was painted by local artist, Jo Waite, to represent special features of the Merri landscape. The full tapestry can be seen at www.riverfoundation.org.au

Ride to Work Day 2008

Fourteen out of 17 MCMC staff members rode to work on *National Ride to Work Day*, on 15th October. Most of them are regular cyclists.



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