



Annual General Meeting - 14 September 2014

President's Report 2013-2014

Brief Overview:

The year 2014 has been a significant marker in Wallan Environment Group's (WEG) short history, as it has marked 10 years since Friends of Wallan Creek was officially established in May 2004. The group has much to be proud over its 10 years of existence, which has included on-ground works to enhance, restore and protect open space areas in Wallan, undertaking community awareness activities, and advocacy on a wide range of environmental issues.

The impact of the 9-10 February 2014 bushfires, which burnt 73% of the Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group's area, including the properties of two WEG committee members, unfortunately meant that the planned 10th year celebration event could not be held as their energy was needed elsewhere with bushfire recovery. However, the committee did mark the group's first decade with a dinner.

Over the past year, the group has continued to work hard to enhance and extend the green open space areas of Wallan. This has included the group again breaking new ground through the indigenous garden project along Taylors Creek.

A summary of the group's activities over the past year is below.

On-ground Work:

- Monthly working bees were held at six public land sites: i.e. Wallan Community Park, Taylors Creek Reserve, Danahers Reserve, Greenhill Reserve, Hadfield Park, and Wallan Primary School
- Extra planting days – about 15 sessions were held on weekends

Mulch

- 220 cubic metres of mulch was used at three public land sites

Planting:

A total of 7,490 plants were planted on public land by WEG, at the following sites:

- Hadfield Park (just downstream from Queen St traffic lights) - 500 plants along creek
- Wallan Primary School - 810 plants
- Wallan Footy Ground (along fence line north of ground and behind club rooms) - 350 plants
- Wallan Community Park - 1,280 plants for in-fill planting and for individual trees
- Taylors Creek Reserve - 850 plants for in-fill planting
- Danaher Reserve - 450 plants for in-fill planting
- Oval no. 2 oval Wallan Footy Ground - 950 plants used in extended area and for in-fill planting
- Wedding Drive entry to Wallan Community Park - 500 plants
- Hadfield Park – 150 plants for in-fill planting in Trees for Mum site
- Indigenous garden project along Taylors Creek - 2,000 plants
- Residents of Wallara Waters - 600 plants given to residents to promote local flora species

National Tree Day 2014:

- Planting @ Greenhill Reserve (July 2014) - 390 plants planted

Grants Secured:

Total - \$20,218, including:

- Melbourne Water 2013-14 Community Grants - \$19,118 "*Indigenous Garden Project*"
- Melbourne Water 2013-14 Community Grants - \$1,000 "*Support Grant*"

Training:

- Several committee members attended governance training

Workshops Held:

- Weaving & Twining Workshop (November 2013)

Media:

- Numerous media releases were put out on planting days and events

Committee Meetings:

- 11 (monthly) WEG committee meetings were held

Representation on Committees:

- Mitchell Shire Environment Advisory Committee - R.Eldridge
- Merri Creek Management Committee (quarterly meetings) - R.Eldridge
- Wallan Structure Plan Community Liaison Group - R.Eldridge & C.James
- Mitchell Shire Financial Sustainability Group - R.Eldridge

VCAT Hearings

- J. Robinson presented at VCAT hearing (15 Sept 13), which also attended by R. Eldridge & C.James

Submissions:

WEG's committee drafted submissions on the following Mitchell Shire Council draft documents:

- Integrated Community Services and Infrastructure Plan
- Mitchell Environment Strategy
- Wallan Multi-purpose Centre
- 3756 Structure Plan

WEG's Strategic Plan

- WEG's committee completed a revision of WEG's Strategic Plan (Sept 2014)

Thank You's:

- Claudia James, for her on-going role as Secretary, including collecting and filing mail, doing the banking, organising meeting rooms for the committee meetings, sending out working bee invites to members, ensuring the group meets its insurance and incorporation requirements, drafting submissions, work with photographs and a whole range of work that enables the group to keep ticking over efficiently
- Sue Gribble, for her work as the minute Secretary, undertaking the butterfly garden project at Wallan Primary School, her interest in local flora and fauna, and her attachment to detail
- David James, for his role as Treasurer, doing BAS statements and producing regular financial statements, providing an opportunity for committee members to attend first aid training, sourcing \$ (from Wallan Swap Meet) for project at Greenhill Reserve, and for photo copy paper
- Judy Clarke, for her work on the 10th anniversary event, for running the weaving and twining workshop, and for the indigenous garden project along Taylors Creek
- Rob Eldridge, for his advocacy for Wallan with local councillors and Shire staff, as group's rep on various committees, for catering at working bees and initiating the 10th anniversary project
- Peter Hanson, for filling as Minute Secretary, coming along to some of the extra planting days I organized, and helping with the distribution of local plants to residents of Wallara Waters
- Louise Jarvie, for her work on group's OHS document and 10th birthday celebrations (eg cake)
- Bill Barker, for his stewardship of Wallan Community Park, eg weed spotting/poo collection

- Diane Eldridge for providing morning tea at many of the group's monthly working bees
- Mitchell Shire Council staff for their on-going support, in particular Vivian Pasic, Scott Gilchrist, Ben Stewart and Shire's Parks and Gardens Team
- Pauline Cornish (Wallan Neighbourhood House) for allowing WEG to use a room for meetings
- Thank you to everyone who has participated in the group's working bees and activities over the past year and who have supported the group in a wide variety of ways.

Reflections

On a personal level, 2014 has been a tough year as the February fires, which burnt almost all our 108 acres property, meant that I have not had much time to devote to WEG since then. While it has been a pleasure to serve as the WEG's President over the past 5-6 years, it is now time for me to pass on the President's baton to a new incumbent. While I am looking forward to stepping back from this role, I will continue on the committee for the next 12 months to finish off several projects and to provide support where needed.

The results of the group's on-ground work over the past decade are becoming more visible as the plants that have planted continue to grow. I look forward to WEG continuing its work to enhance, restore, and protect the environmental values of Wallan's open space areas.

John Robinson - 14 September 2013