

FRIENDS OF THE MARIBYRNONG VALLEY

NEWSLETTER - WINTER 2007

It is a while since this retired yet overworked editor had both time and incentive to sit down and write a newsletter. In that time, the list of activities that the group has been involved with has grown, so this report for members will take the form of an update on things that we have been involved with. Possibly the most warming thing - apart from the hard labour that the "riversiders" put in on Wednesday mornings - is that we have two new regular chums at the monthly meetings. There is Judy Ingram whose energy and persistence in pursuing chains of information or searching out bureaucratic responses will be an asset to the group. And there is Michael Capsalis who for a few months has been a willing contributor around Grimes' Flat and Canning Street on Wednesday mornings too. We welcome both to the FMV and look forward to their company in the future.

We also congratulate Michael on securing a position with City West Water since joining us. Could there be a networking factor at play here?

WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON?

Bird Book - The preparation of the fully revised second edition is still in the early to mid stages with some chapter evaluation and revision done and an updated birds list about to crystallize. Surprising how in the span of twenty years so many "new" birds can be forcing their way into the top 50 and others have become less locally abundant. New list soon. Moonee Valley Council is a willing supporter of this project and has already chipped in towards the overall production costs. Thanks, MVCC. From the editor's balcony have been seen a couple of birds new to the area: Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and Eastern Spinebill. Kookaburras are also resident just down the road too. The nesting boxes are both occupied; one with a busy pair of Galahs, the other pirated by Mynas; 50%.

The Other River - Work on the update of our popular informative video on our favourite river is also in the formative stages. Peter has done some early work and is looking at aspects of what exactly is required - in terms of additional material and professional production.

Plantings - The Riverside Planting Team viz. Ian, Bron and Lorraine completed their two scheduled plantings early this winter but on cue more plantings materialize out of the blue. I was impressed to see a planting last Friday when the team had organized an additional planting between the track and riverbank along the Teagardens to Steele Creek reach. A dozen St Columba's girls, with a little assistance, put in over 200 plants including a special grass and sedge bed. See the website Photo Pages for Columba Power in action. Another new site was also offered to us. The crib wall on the escarpment at the west end of Chifley Drive, Maribyrnong had been partially planted by Council a year ago with moderate success and needs urgent enhancement. A planting list has been submitted to Maribyrnong Council and we are planning to put in over 200 specimens on either Wednesday 8th or 15th of August, hopefully with help from one of the local schools.

Afton Street Conservation Park is also home to a planting day on Sunday July 15. Clean and Green Maribyrnong and City of Brimbank also have some planting dates that we may be involved with too. Those who enjoy a morning of fresh air and jovial company at weekends can get details of all plantings from John or Maelor.

Printing - We have a new batch of updated membership brochures. Fleur did the updates for us and we appreciate her effort. We are now looking at producing certificates to acknowledge contributions by non-member groups or people and also for Honorary Memberships. We are hoping also to have handout mini-certificates for those who help at plantings and similar events.

Tour - The group is planning to have a look at Niddrie Lake, now that it is becoming a more mature feature and recently filled with water. We are hoping to be there on Thu/Fri 2/3 August. For update, contact Maelor or Ian.

FMV AT OTHER FORUMS

Our representation on various local panels and committees is still growing. Most recently we have been invited to join the Aberfeldie Park Steering committee; Maelor is representing FMV there. An interesting issue for us is that there is one corner that gets boggy whenever there is rain. We see that as a potential wetland development.

In Moonee Valley territory there we have other areas of input. Simon reports back from Afton Street Conservation Park, Ian represents FMV at the Steele Creek refurbishment meetings (attended also by reps of St Bernard's College and Friends of Steele Creek) and John contributes to the MV Street Trees Scheme and Keilor Park Drive Master Plan. In the City of Maribyrnong we have direct input to discussions on planting schemes at Maribyrnong Reserve, the Chifley Drive crib wall and make input to the Highpoint Area Strategic Plan.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Planting has become such a constant activity of FMV that we are constantly improving and upgrading our facilities and equipment. Ian is not only logistics coordinator for plantings but is also warehousing manager - much to Frances' chagrin. As we get more and bigger equipment so the Wheelers lose a bit more of their house. Things could even get worse for them when FMV gets the new trailer that is so much needed. So we are desperately seeking for lockup accommodation in the riverside area of Moonee Valley/Maribyrnong councils. The Defence site has lots of buildings but access and security are problems. There are other possibilities that we are pursuing. Updates later.

Signage was a topic at recent meetings. We noted with some regret the passing of the set of Heritage Signs that we designed and constructed and installed with the cooperation of councils between Footscray and the Trestle Bridge. These have lasted for almost twenty years but the combined forces of weather, corrosion, vandalism and theft have resulted in only a few remaining. Perhaps we should record the last remaining one when all others are gone.

But we have new signage projects. The informative sign at the Educational Garden between Canning Street and the Teagardens will complete the project there.

We have also adopted a project to provide a memorial to Nick the Hermit near Steele Creek where he and his cats dwelt in the '60s. Peter is coordinating a number of sources to bring this together.

FIN

Editor will have a cup of coffee now and watch the galahs nesting. Hooroo.