

Strong Wind Damage

On Australia Day, 26 January 2006, for a few minutes Blackburn residents experienced a mini-tornado that caused great anxiety, and extensive property and environmental damage. Fortunately no personal injury has been reported.

Furness Park was strewn with debris of vegetation stripped from trees. The stately old Eucalypts, the manna gum (*E. viminalis*) and yellowbox (*E. melliodora*) that dotted the skyline had been, in many instances, severely damaged. It is a tragedy to see these old gems so mutilated in such a short time. They have been a highlight of Furness Park, many being over 100 years old.

The loss of trees along the Creeklands has, in some instances, exposed homes that now intrude visually on the parklands. The rustic feel has been lost in these locations, but it is hoped that the regrowth will soon restore some of the original beauty of these damaged trees. The Advisory Committee is consulting with the Council to ensure that the clean up of damaged vegetation will be managed sensitively.

This episode is a reminder of the need to continue the revegetation and carefully nurture precious indigenous vegetation within the parklands.

Creek Bank Rehabilitation Works

Melbourne Water's plans for work on the section of Gardiners Creek in the Blackburn Creeklands have now been finalised and are on display at the Blackburn Library. The work is divided into two stages: Furness Park between Blackburn Road and Main Street, and Kalang Park between the Laurel Grove bridge and Pakenham Street. David Fisher, the project manager for Melbourne Water, hopes the Furness Park section will commence shortly starting at Blackburn Road.

The erosion control measures will involve a combination of sloping back of banks, rock lining, and some re-alignment. Banks and access points where machinery has entered will be repaired and revegetated. Work will also be carried out where a number of storm water drains are causing erosion as they enter the creek. Discussion and on-site meetings have been held between Melbourne Water, the Advisory Committee and ParksWide Officers to ensure that every effort is made to minimise damage to indigenous vegetation. David also conducted a very informative walk along the creek to explain the proposed works to the local community.

Preparing for the Summer Fire Season

Recently the Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Services Board (MFB) in partnership with the City of Whitehorse and supported by the CFA, held an information evening for local residents, particularly those living near bushland areas like Blackburn Lake Sanctuary.

Approximately 50 people attended an informative session with lots of questions answered on preparing your home and property and protecting it, in the event of a bushfire.

Did you know that on Total Fire Ban days the City of Whitehorse carry out fire patrols in Reserves? Whitehorse also carry out works to reduce fuel and other potential fire hazards, on a yearly basis.

If you were unable to attend the session and would like more information, there are 2 brochures for your interest, available at the Council offices or at the service centres, Box Hill Town Hall, Forest Hill Chase Shopping Centre & Whitehorse Civic Centre.

The brochures are 'Operation Bushfire Safety' and 'Summer Fire Safety' (MFB)

Remember for fire & emergency Dial 000

Did You Know?

The City of Whitehorse requires that: (refer www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

Cats over 6 months old must be registered. (Failure to register incurs a \$200 fine)

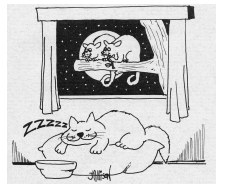
A permit is required if you have more than 2 cats.

Cat owners must ensure that their cats are kept confined to their property at all times.

CAT FACTS: (refer: Dept of Sustainability & Environment)

- One pet cat kills an average of 35 wildlife (birds, frogs, lizards, small mammals) every year. (that's almost one every 10 days!)
- Roaming cats risk injury, infection, and disease from fights with other cats
- Roaming cats spray, howl and annoy neighbours, especially during mating season.
- Leaving food out for stray cats increases breeding, attracts vermin and feral birds, and still does not prevent attacks on wildlife.

PROTECT YOUR CAT.....PROTECT OUR WILDLIFE!



Why don't they tidy it up?

Melbourne is noted for its parks, most of them planted with European trees and ornamental flowerbeds. At Blackburn Lake Sanctuary we have something very different. Take a walk there: leave behind the picnic area and playground, bypass the remnant flowerbed commemorating the old Deaf Society Flower Farm, and enter a piece of genuine Australian bush.

This is the bush that has inspired artists like McCubbin and Brooke Hansen. Untidy and alien to European eyes, the bush caused such fear in Australia's early settlers that they tried to civilize it or eradicate it altogether.



In most of the city the bush disappeared, replaced by rows of neat houses with manicured gardens. And as the bush vanished, so too did its wildlife – the kangaroos, koalas, wombats and echidnas, the birds and the butterflies.

The Australian bush is a self-sustaining ecosystem where plants and animals depend on each other for survival. Vegetation provides food for animals, birds and insects, which in turn help to pollinate the plants and spread their seeds. Similarly, branches falling into water provide food for aquatic creatures. Tall trees offer nesting sites for larger birds like kookaburras, owls and magpies, while mid-level scrub affords protection and shelter for tiny birds – wrens, fantails and finches. Fallen trees provide shelter for myriads of insects, lizards, and other creepy-crawlies, and are eventually broken down by mosses and fungi, enriching and replenishing the soil. Understanding the interdependence of this ecosystem allows us to appreciate the 'untidiness' of the bush as a necessary part of nature's ecological balance.

Today Blackburn Lake Sanctuary is widely recognized for its ecological significance. In recognition of its habitat qualities it has been accorded 'Land for Wildlife' status.

Declaration of the area as a Sanctuary ensures the protection and preservation of the animal and plant life of the area.



Help for Wildlife?: ring 0417 380 687 for your nearest wildlife carer

EPA Pollution Hotline: 9695 2777 or 1800 444 004 (both 24hrs)

Ring immediately you notice a problem, be specific with details such as what, when and where, and your contact details. Confidentiality is assured.

Bridge Repairs

Work was carried out by Council just prior to Christmas to repair the footings on the west side of the Main Street bridge. A large poplar was removed as the roots were the cause of much of the damage.

Awards for Community Service

The Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee congratulates two of its members on their recent Australia Day 2006 Awards, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the local community.

Megan Short received a **Community Achievement Award** from the City of Whitehorse. Megan has been President of the Advisory Committee for over twenty years, providing leadership, and expertise as a zoologist. She played a leading role in persuading the Council to purchase a large section of Kalang Park in the early 80s, enabling the formation of the Blackburn Creeklands. Megan and her husband Peter were actively involved in the formation of the Jolimont Road Community Gardens.

Alan Lodge received a **Deakin Community Australia Day Award** from Phil Barresi Federal MP. Alan has been on the Advisory Committee for sixteen years, where his special knowledge of indigenous vegetation is a great asset. In addition he has spent countless hours in hands-on work within the Creeklands, particularly in Blacks Walk, nurturing indigenous vegetation. Alan has been active in the Indigenous Plants Project (now located at Bungalook Nursery), for fifteen years.

Weeds, weeds, weeds....

By definition a weed is generally 'a plant growing in the wrong place' – a plant which is inappropriate, either because of the environmental or economic damage it can cause, or for aesthetic reasons.

Much of the work carried out in our bushland parks by Council staff and volunteers is related to the ongoing removal and control of weeds.

As residents who live within close proximity to our unique and beautiful bushland parks we are often responsible for unwittingly spreading weeds (even without the help of the wind and the wonderful bird life).

We wish to draw your attention to a reasonably new publication produced by City of Whitehorse – 'Weeds in Whitehorse'. This great pamphlet clearly identifies and advises on control techniques. Many of the plants identified are often not considered as a weed or potential bushland invader.

Copies of this publication are available from City of Whitehorse offices.



Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee Coming Events

Committee Meetings

Please note that the Committee now meet at 8.00pm on the 4th Wednesday of each month (except for December) at The Avenue Neighbourhood House, 48 Blackburn Road, Blackburn.
All welcome.

Working Bees These dates and times are sometimes subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Close to the date please check the notice board and park notices, or ring Philip Brentnall on 9877 5445

2006

February	Wednesday 22	Monthly Committee Meeting
	Friday 24 5.30pm	Twilight Working Bee. Meet at the Furness Park Playground Bring a picnic tea.
March	Sunday 5 10.00am - noon	Clean Up Australia Day Meet at the Scout Hall
	Wednesday 22	Monthly Committee Meeting
April	Wednesday 26	Monthly Committee Meeting
May	Wednesday 24	Monthly Committee Meeting
	Sunday 28	Working Bee. Planting near Middleborough Rd southern entrance
June	Sunday 25 10am - midday	Working Bee Furness Park, beside Main St
	Wednesday 28	Monthly Committee Meeting
July	Wednesday 26	Annual General Meeting
	Sunday 30 10am - midday	Working Bee National Tree Day, see notice board for details

Front cover drawing of Spotted Pardalote by George Adams "Birdscaping Your Garden" Landsdowne. 1980



Blackburn Lake Sanctuary and Blackburn Creeklands



Newsletter Summer - Autumn 2006

Spotted Pardalote





.....Coming up in 2006

All Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Advisory Committee Meetings are held on the 1st Thursday every month, at 8pm, & interested park users are warmly invited to attend.

Working Bees are what make our bushland so magnificent, so, come along, meet new friends and neighbours and join in the fun!

For information, enquiries, or to contact a Committee member, ring 9877 9235 & leave your contact details.

Month		Blackburn Lake Sanctuary		
February	Sunday	12	"Snakebusters" Snakes & Lizards with Scott Eipper	2 - 4 pm at the Visitor Centre Everyone Welcome
March	Sunday	5	Clean Up Australia Day, then help the WaterWatch team search for bugs under the microscopes!	10 - noon Meet at Visitor Centre, Everyone Welcome
	Sunday	19	The Energy Explorer - reducing your energy bills. See a real wind turbine, windmill & solar panels at work. Push buttons, make things work!	2 - 4pm Meet at the Visitor Centre Everyone Welcome
	Friday	31	Frog census at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary	7 pm -9 pm Bookings essential, ring Melbourne Water 131 722 email education@melbournewater.com.au
April	Sunday	2	Reconciliation picnic with bush tucker walks and talks	Noon - 3.30 pm Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation.
	Saturday	8	Breakfast with the Birds Barbara Longmuir & Ian Moodie	7.30 am Visitor Centre Everyone Welcome
	Saturday	22	Working bee	10 - noon Everyone Welcome Meet at the Visitor Centre.
	Friday	28	Possum prowl	7 pm at Visitor Centre Bring your torch & red cellophane.
May	Friday	12	Aboriginal night sky Shane Charles	7.00 - 10.00 pm Everyone Welcome
	Sunday	21	Get the dirt on our local soil, rocks & landscapes, with Geologist Phil Bock	2-4 pm Everyone Welcome Meet at the Visitor Centre
	Sunday	28	Working bee	10 - noon Everyone Welcome Meet at the Visitor Centre
June	Wednesday	14	Planting Day for Schools	Contact Elaine on 9877 5896 Or leave message on 9877 9235
	Saturday	17	Community planting day	10 - noon Everyone Welcome Meet at the Visitor Centre
	Friday	23	Astronomy (to be confirmed)	7.00 - 10.00pm
July	Sunday	16	Working bee	10 - noon Everyone Welcome Meet at the Visitor Centre
	Sunday	23	Effortless Recycling, Composting & Sustainability, with Greg Donoghue , from Eco-organics	2 - 4 pm Everyone Welcome Meet at the Visitor Centre

Visit our website for more information: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~blsac>