



# Blackburn Bushland News

April - September 2014



## Greetings,

Friends of Blackburn Lake Sanctuary and the Blackburn Creeklands.

If you have seen recent editions of the Blackburn Bushland News you will be aware that we are entering a new era.

Visits to the park websites have increased greatly, as has the number of people receiving the newsletter by email.

However the Advisory Committees wish to keep in touch with Friends who do not use the internet and email. In order to do that we will continue to publish the Blackburn Bushland News twice a year, to be available at the BLS Visitor Centre, and home delivered on request.

The Bushland News will contain a summary of news items and photographs from the respective websites, and maybe a little bit more!

We hope you enjoy the new format and find it easy to read. We'd love to get your feedback!



Photograph – Ian Moodie

**Everybody's favourites – an unusually large family of four Tawny Frogmouth chicks growing up in the Sanctuary**

## AUTUMN BIRD SURVEYS

Bi-annual bird surveys are conducted in both bushland parks to identify and monitor the species that live there, either permanently or temporarily.

### Blackburn Lake Sanctuary

Thirty interested bird enthusiasts took part under the expert guidance of Birdlife Australia members Jenny Frohlich and Geoff Deason. We spotted 38 different species, and were delighted to see lots of Spotted Pardalotes, Grey Fantails and a pair of Scarlet Robins visiting the sanctuary again for the winter.

Jenny is a regular contributor to our monthly bird list on the noticeboard at the Visitor Centre, along with Advisory Committee member Deirdre, and of course Geoff. If you haven't noticed it before take a moment to see what wonderful birds reside in or visit the Sanctuary from time to time, and add your sightings to the list. Geoff has been recording species at the Sanctuary since the 1970's, and his extensive records are on display in the **Visitor Centre, which is open to the public on Sunday afternoons from 2 – 4.00 pm**, provided volunteers are available.

Maybe you would like to be part of the team which greets and welcomes a wide range of visitors from many parts of the world, to the sanctuary?

Contact Anne on 9878 1152 for more information.

### Blackburn Creeklands Bird Count

On 26th April, twenty people turned up to help with the survey, under the expert guidance of Pat Bingham (Birdlife Australia) and Ian Moodie (ParksWide). It astounds most of us how accurately Ian and Pat can identify birds from a call, the glimpse of a silhouette, or how it flaps its wings! It's great to slow down, be quiet, and notice what the birds are doing - perching, sleeping, courting, quarrelling, foraging, and flying; and to be confident we know what species of bird we are looking at.

At the end we gathered at the Scout Hall (thank you Scouts), to have a cuppa, compare lists and count the species. Combined, we saw 30 in all. If you haven't participated in a bird survey before do come along to the next one – it's well worth turning out early.

On another note, a shore birds expert in the group recommended the website [farewellshorebirds.org.au](http://farewellshorebirds.org.au) where you can register to receive weekly webcasts about the current migration of shore birds from Australia to Siberia and elsewhere in the northern hemisphere. Lots of great information.

### RECOGNITION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary's very own **Peter Wise** won a Leadership award at the recent Whitehorse Sustainability Award evening at the Box Hill Community Art centre. Peter has been an active member of the BLS for nearly 20 years and is passionate about working in the bushland. Peter co-ordinates our working bees and Clean Up Australia Days and is a valued member of the Tuesday Weeders who work in our most precious areas of the Sanctuary every Tuesday from 9.30 – 11.00am.



### Become a Friend

It's never too late to become a Friend of the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary or the Blackburn Creeklands . . . . or even both!

Join up and make sure of receiving your bi-annual copy of the Blackburn Bushland News, and lots more besides. See the boxes on the back pages for details of who to contact.



Scarlet Robin

**KEEP THESE NUMBERS HANDY**  
(All 24 hours services)

**Environment Protection Authority** - to report pollution in the lake or creek 1300 372 842

**Whitehorse Council**  
9262 6333

**Help or advice for injured or orphaned animals -**

**Wildlife Victoria**  
13 000 94535

**Help for Wildlife**  
0417 380 687



Many of **Blackburn Creeklands' Friends** will know **Alan Lodge** as a familiar face at working bees and he is often seen working alone in the park. Alan received a City of Whitehorse Community Achievement Award on Australia Day for the enormous contributions he has made over many decades to Blackburn Creeklands, and to the Bungalook nursery run by Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant Program. Alan works tirelessly in the park, weeding, collecting seed, propagating and planting throughout the year, and his professional expertise in surveying and storm-water management has been very helpful.

### **Kalang Park Pavilion Upgrade**

Council's Project Officers have met with Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee representatives to enlighten us about the proposed upgrade which the sporting clubs are seeking. Built in 1965, the pavilion does not comply with current requirements and standards such as universal access. The plan is to double its size with work proposed to start mid 2015 using materials that will blend in with the environment. External toilets and drinking taps are being considered for the convenience of all park users.

**INDIGENOUS PLANTS** for your garden can be purchased from these volunteer run nurseries.

They also provide most of the plant stock used for re-vegetating the bushland parks.

### **Greenlink Box Hill Nursery**

41 Wimmera Street  
Box Hill  
Open Tuesdays and  
Wednesdays 9am - 12 noon  
Contact 0479 121 653  
Website –  
google 'Greenlink Box Hill'

### **Bungalook Nursery**

63 Fulton Road  
Blackburn South  
Open Fridays 9.30am – 12noon  
Enquiries -  
[wcipp@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wcipp@yahoo.com.au)  
Website – [wcipp.org.au](http://wcipp.org.au)

### **Realignment of the Path at the Creeklands Main St Entrance**

The path realignment work on the north side is nearing completion following extensive woody weed removal and much TLC by Committee and Friends over several working bees. It has made the entrance more inviting and once the indigenous plants are established the area will look more natural and provide better habitat. As an intensive development has been proposed for 60 Main Street, we hope it will also provide a softening effect to any buildings that eventuate.



This land was one of the most neglected areas in the park until rehabilitation work started last year. The Committee has been eagerly awaiting the conclusion of the Council path works, which includes 'ripping' the old compacted path, so we can get stuck into re-vegetation work during autumn.

### **Melbourne Water Grant**

The Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee is delighted to announce that our grant application to Melbourne Water has been successful! This provides \$5,300 over 18 months for plants and equipment. The grant will be allocated to rehabilitating the land adjacent to 60 Main Street and also for re-vegetating the billabong surrounds.

## WATER QUALITY ISSUES

Pollution of water in the lake and the creek, is a recurring and troublesome problem.

If you see yellow discolouration, oil, or any other pollutants **anywhere** please report it to the EPA on **1300 372 842**.

### Testing the water at Blackburn Lake

Recently, a clay spill upstream of the lake, most probably deliberately washed down from a near-by building site, caused turbidity readings, which are a measure of the amount of un-dissolved solids in the water, to increase 20 fold. Ammonia levels have also been at least ten times the normal readings, and this can be caused by rotting vegetation, soil and sewage spills, chemicals or dog excrement washing into the lake.

Each month a small team of Melbourne Water-accredited volunteers test samples of water from around the Lake, and every 2-3 months, we collect and identify the macro-invertebrates (ie the water bugs) living in the Lake. Good levels of dissolved oxygen are also necessary not only for the water plants (habitat and shelter for water birds and water bugs) but also the macro-invertebrates, fish and turtles, which are all important parts of the food chain. Ammonia and phosphate levels are also checked, and high readings for these indicate a real problem in the Lake.



From the Waterbug Book

**Did you know? Blackburn Lake has a brand new, super water fountain in the courtyard, kindly donated by Melbourne Water .**

**If you would like to see what the water quality is like, you are welcome to join us, usually on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at 9.30am. You can ring 0437 172 333 to confirm the date if you are interested in helping.**

### Pollution in the Creeklands

There was also an incident of contamination after a sewer main in Canterbury Road leaked, causing effluent to enter the creek near the Laurel Grove bridge. The Yarra Valley Water maintenance crew placed bales of straw and a roll of absorbent material in the water to minimise pollution escaping downstream. That was followed by skimming the effluent off into a tanker, and finally a good flush directly from nearby hydrants. Glad that's over!

### DOGS

**Dog excrement is also a cause of pollution.** Time for a reminder that dog owners are required by law to carry a plastic bag to pick up after their pooch, and it goes without saying, that the bag is not to be left on the tracks, but disposed of in one of the bins supplied, or preferably taken home.

**Responsible dog owners** who keep their dogs leashed are much more likely to enjoy the sight of a perky little Fairy Wren hopping about in the bushes, the antics of the Spotted Pardalotes in the hanging branches of the eucalypts, or a shy Buff-banded Rail beside the water.

### FOXES

Sadly the body of a lovely Nankeen Night Heron was found in the Sanctuary recently, killed by a fox, and a turtle nest has been dug up, with dozens of eggs destroyed. At least five fox holes have been found at the Sanctuary, and several foxes sighted. Council is employing contractors to eradicate active fox dens in both the Sanctuary and the Creeklands. Please do not feed or encourage foxes as they are a serious threat to wildlife – especially lizards, turtles, and birds, and also domestic pets. Advise Council (9262 6333), if you know about a den on public land, and employ a contractor to destroy it if there is a den on your own property.



## BLACKBURN LAKE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Visitor Centre, Central Rd, Blackburn (Melway Ref 48 B11)

Open Sundays 2 - 4.00 pm or by arrangement with the Advisory Committee

General enquiries: 9877 9235 - leave a message and contact details

Email: [blsac@bigpond.com](mailto:blsac@bigpond.com)

Website: [BlackburnLakeSanctuary.org](http://BlackburnLakeSanctuary.org)

Chairperson: Sue Fenton 0438 984 802

Secretary: Peter Dempsey 9878 6829

Visitor Centre Coordinator: Anne Payne 9878 1152

Education Program Officer: Lucy Menzies 9262 6211

**Meetings** are held at 7.30 pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month, in the Visitor Centre. Interested park users are invited to attend.

## BLACKBURN LAKE SANCTUARY - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Advisory Committee and Friends will be caring for the bushland on the following

Saturday mornings from 10am - 12 noon:

May 17<sup>th</sup>, June 14<sup>th</sup>, July 19<sup>th</sup> (our Community Planting Day - the reward for all that weeding!)

July 23<sup>rd</sup> is the Schools planting day - contact Lucy if your school would like to be involved

August 16<sup>th</sup> and September 13<sup>th</sup> it's weeding and mulching

Then every Saturday in October it's back to weeding as it's Weedbusters month!

**Why not come and join us? They are always very satisfying and rewarding mornings.**

If Saturdays don't suit you, maybe you are free on **Tuesday mornings from 9.30 – 11am** to join a small dedicated team who protect and maintain the best of our bushland.



### Join us at the Visitor Centre for these fabulous Sunday Special Sessions

✚ **Sunday 18 May at 2 – 4.00 pm.** Join us for a **Fascinating Fungi Walk & Talk** around the Sanctuary, with well-known local environmental educator **Cecily Falkingham**.

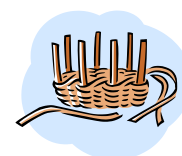
✚ **Thursday 5 June at 7 – 8.30 pm.** Help us celebrate **World Environment Day** with Angelo Eliades, a passionate forest gardening advocate from Deep Green Permaculture. Angelo will share his experience and knowledge about creating edible forest gardens in the suburbs.

Please book on 9262 6211 or by email [lucy.menzies@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:lucy.menzies@whitehorse.vic.gov.au) and bring something home-made, or grown, for a shared supper.



**World Environment Day** is the United Nations' principal vehicle for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the environment. It also serves as the people's day for doing something positive for the environment, galvanizing individual actions into a collective power that generates a positive impact on the planet.

✚ **Sunday 27 July.** The **Basket Weavers** will be visiting. Your chance to learn how to weave with natural fibres for a small \$5 donation towards the costs of materials.



✚ **Sunday 24 August at 2.00 pm - Forensic Science** is on the agenda. Keep an eye out at the Visitor Centre for more details

## BELOW THE LAKE FRIENDS

A newly formed group of neighbours from Naughton Gv /Rosalind Cr area, under the enthusiastic guidance of Lynette from Carey Ct, have been removing weed species from Jamieson Reserve, opposite the dam wall in Lake Rd, in preparation for a return to indigenous bushland.

Lynette successfully applied to Melbourne Water for a substantial grant to enable this to happen. Well done Lynette, and thank you for your efforts to enhance the bushland corridors around the Sanctuary

***You are most welcome to be part of this exciting community initiative.***

***Come along on the first Sunday of every month from 2 – 4.00 pm, or contact Lynette on 0416 178 945***



## BLACKBURN CREEKLANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Telephone enquiries - Nicola Misso 9878 8848

Email - [BlackburnCreeklads@gmail.com](mailto:BlackburnCreeklads@gmail.com)

Website - [BlackburnCreeklads.Wordpress.com](http://BlackburnCreeklads.Wordpress.com)

Postal address - PO Box 5119 Laburnum Vic 3130

**Meetings** are held at 7.30 on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at the Bowls Club in Pakenham Street  
**AGM 24<sup>th</sup> July**

Visitors are welcome.

## BLACKBURN CREEKLANDS - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Watch the notice board for further details**

**Working Bees** - are held on Sundays from 9.00 am onwards.  
May 25, June 29, July 27, August 24, September 28,  
October 19, and November 9.

**Maintenance Team.** If Sundays don't suit you, a small friendly group works together on Monday and Thursday mornings at various locations requiring special care. Ring Mary on 9894 3025.

**Spring Bird Survey** on Saturday 18 October. Arrive in time to register then set off at 7.30 am sharp from the Scout Hall in Pakenham Street.

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**Male Gang Gang Cockatoo**



**Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo**

Two regular visitors to Whitehorse photographed by Ian Moodie

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## TREE EDUCATION OFFICER

Ms Millie Wells is the new Tree Education Officer at Whitehorse City Council. Council has recently launched the Tree Education Program to raise awareness within the community of the value of urban trees with focus mostly on private properties.

Her position is new and is within the Planning Department – her focus being community education. She is planning workshops, holiday programs and creation of a Facebook page devoted to the “Urban Forest Network” in Whitehorse.

After 8<sup>th</sup> May you can reach Millie on 9262 6131

or via e-mail: [millie.wells@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:millie.wells@whitehorse.vic.gov.au) .