

The logo for MEAFEC is written in a large, white, stylized font with a black outline, set against a background of a coastal landscape with a river and trees.

Mount Eliza Association for Environmental Care

# September 2013 Newsletter

ABN 64 566 184 275 ASN A0018210M

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## Wild Weather for Weed War

**On the foreshore, south of Williams Road, waves surged over the beach exposing bed-rock, undermining the cliff-face and the beach-hall's board-mat. Northerly gales battered the new roof of the hall.**

It was 9.30 am on Saturday 3 August. Arrangements for the Weed War were rapidly being revised. Work plans for the exposed site, at the bottom of the bitumen track, was cancelled.

Nonetheless the intrepid were not deterred. Soon after 10 am volunteers and contractors were huddled high on the headland, behind boobialla. Their target was Panic veldt. They knew its careful removal would prevent weed-spread and increase ground-flora resilience ... And already dominant species, Seaberry Saltbush and Bower Spinach were familiar.

Yet as the day progressed, many were to experience the joy of uncovering species unknown at this location - *Short-stem sedge and Weeping Grass*. By early-afternoon, contractor, Peter Nash had led a team seaward. Here beyond the protection of boobialla, a stunning expanse of Coast Sword-sedge awaited weeding. Neither wind nor impending rain diminished the efficiency of the weeding team. Panic veldt and *Vulpia* too, was the target at this site.

Thank you to the 26 people who attended our annual event. Particular thanks go to the Friends and contractors who mentored the scouts, MEAFEC and our sponsor, Communities for Nature.

MEAFEC would like to thank Ann Scholes for her dedication to the site at Williams Road. Her leadership in the area means Mt Eliza's coast is as nature intended.



# John Butler Reserve and Car Park Redevelopment

## New Council plans mean 78 trees are listed for removal.

Some of you may not be aware the Council is intending to redevelop the car park precinct adjacent to the John Butler Reserve. These plans were approved at the time when the skate park was relocated to Wooralla Drive. In brief, the council intends to remove the parking section from behind Ti-tree Doctors Surgery and extend parking over near the Kindergarten. To carry out these plans 78 trees are listed for removal: many of which are a part of the Ranelagh Estate and covered by Heritage laws.

We have identified 28 trees that should be saved, however the current plan shows they are to be removed for the car park. To do the right thing by Mount Eliza Village, straight roads and straight car parking is not a viable solution for the trees or the atmosphere of Mount Eliza's Village. Mount Eliza is being reduced to just another suburb when its trees, with their individual character, are removed. If roads were to remain in keeping with the Village atmosphere they should be winding not straight and therefore flow around the trees. Recall William Guilfoyle's design of the Royal Botanic Gardens with its curved paths and Walter Burley Griffin's similar design of the Ranelagh Estate. We consider the plan to be destructive of the Mount Eliza Village character as well as being expensive. We note the Chamber of Commerce is also opposed to the current plan.

It appears that the car park has been designed to fit the area and then overlaid on top of the existing layout to identify the trees to be removed, rather than taking into consideration the natural trees of the area which should be preserved. The Council's plans are inappropriate and of poor design- not in sympathy with the landscape.

Of the 78 trees proposed for removal we have identified 28 trees which are indigenous and should be retained

- 14 are not on proposed new roads and can be preserved by removing a car space
- 2 require the new roads to be moved by approximately one metre
- 10 are located on proposed new roads.
- 2 are on nature strips and remain so on the proposed plan

Many trees have been listed for removal because they have been deemed prostrate, unbalanced and/or of poor quality. These trees however are merely displaying their natural form and are indeed worthy of preservation. The tree photographed is listed for

removal. Many of the trees are remnant naturally seeded trees with conservation value that enhances the local landscape character. The Conservation Management Plan for the Ranelagh Estate adopted by the Council states: "to conserve maintain and foster the indigenous vegetation within the Ranelagh Estate, to retain the mature landscape and tree covered appearance of Ranelagh Estate".

MEAFEC is not aware that any fauna habitat assessment has been undertaken on the trees listed for removal and has requested the council undertakes to do an assessment so any wildlife can be protected.

We have contacted Heritage Victoria and they advise they cannot do anything until MPSC lodges an application with them. We have recommended that Heritage Victoria reject the application in its current form. MP David Morris is also aware of the plans. MEAFEC is awaiting Council's response to our letter and will keep you informed of developments.





## Mt Eliza Trees Banded

**The Mornington Peninsula Shire agreed to band 7 Mt Eliza trees to protect them from Possum predation.**

Five trees have so far been banded on nature strips these are:

- Opposite 144, 154 and 156 Kunyung Road
- Opposite 31 & 39 Old Mornington Road.
- 146 Mt Eliza way and 107 Wimborne Avenue are still to be banded.

These trees are test cases and if they recover their lost foliage other bandings may follow. However it may be too late for some of the trees.

## Mount Eliza Secondary College update

In our last Newsletter we gave MESC the benefit of an error having been made in clearing the schools vegetation in the hope they would restore the site before spring. As this has not happened and we have been locked out of the site. The facts are:

The school illegally cleared its native vegetation on 26 May much to the shock and dismay of teachers, students and the community. Committee Members of MEAFEC stood in front of the excavator until the police arrived and told the excavator operator to stop work. After the police and MEAFEC left the site the excavator operator disobeyed the police instruction and cleared the rest of the site and then set fire to debris. This disgraceful incident made a mockery of the school motto to 'protect, nurture and grow'. Orchid colonies were destroyed and the school environment program based on the native vegetation was ruined. The School was fully aware of the Flora and Fauna Act covering their property as a copy of an assessment carried out in 2003 had been given to the school by MEAFEC in December 2011. The Education Department is conducting an internal investigation as to how this happened and who authorised it. Recently, the school has engaged consultants to investigate the damage and advise how the site can be restored.

MEAFEC would like to thank the many members who contacted the school to voice your disappointment at the removal of all the vegetation.

## Ranelagh Rocks

MEAFEC is administering a Coastcare Grant along the Mount Eliza Foreshore between Half Moon Bay and Earimil Beach. The works include Weed control and revegetation of native vegetation. The Williams Road Group has assisted by propagating approximately 500 plants from seeds and cuttings collected from the foreshore reserve. These plants will be ready for planting this September. We will shortly set the date for this planting event and call for volunteers to assist.

Many thanks to Ann Scholes and her enthusiastic team.

In preparation for the planting, we have recently arranged for a weed sweep throughout the area to control the polygala, grasses and other weeds which keep coming back. Our contractor will treat the Agapanthus along the top of the cliff, and will lay down the Jute netting to all areas where it is necessary - as per the management plan and instructions from the Shire. This works plan extends the weed control and revegetation project North and South of the previous works programme along the Ranelagh Rocks site.

Ranelagh Rocks is an excellent foreshore area with a high number of good quality native plants – the native vegetation is responding well to the weed control programme.

# Friends Groups

FIRESTATION GARDEN 3rd Sunday  
monthly 10am till 12 noon



EARIMIL CK 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday monthly  
9:30am till 11:30am.



BADEN POWELL RESERVE weekly  
Tues 9:30 & fortnightly between  
2pm - 4pm. Ann 9787 7228.



WILLIAMS ROAD BEACH 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Friday 10am till 3. Ann 9787 7228



VICTORY RESERVE 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday  
Mar, May, Jul, Sep and Nov from  
1 to 4pm. Call Gerard 9787 2507



## Moorooduc Quarry Reserve

MEAFEC members met with Council on site Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August to discuss many ongoing issues with the Quarry these included bike riders, fire lighters, dog walkers and the most serious problem of die-back on Eucalyptus. The meeting was a positive one with Council taking the issues seriously.

After plenty of discussion and looking at the bush/trees MPSC could see the need for some form of protection for trees against possum predation. A Naturelinks representative expressed it as an "Ecological emergency" with everyone agreeing. The Possums are attacking both swamp and radiata gums. Two areas were identified for possible banding: One near the Canadian Bay Road entry at the corner near the viewing platform, banding radiata and another at the bottom of the quarry where swamp gums are being attacked. Banding of these trees is an experiment to prove possums are the main culprit for the tree decline.

The good news is after all MEAFEC's campaigning MPSC is putting together a brief on ecological die back of trees in Mt Eliza and as a part of this is undertaking a possum survey and assessing the causes of die back. The assessment is being carried out by an independent arborist. This report is due in December and should contain recommendations for limiting the die back of the grassy woodland area in the quarry and around MT Eliza generally.

Lastly, we are pleased to advise Gerard has decided to return as leader of the Moorooduc Quarry Friends Group. Initially it was mooted that the Friends start in the 'Botanical Reference' area because it is a limited fenced site. However, 'net gain offset' funds from Peninsula link are being spent on maintaining the reference area therefore it was then suggested the area immediately beside this could be a good place to consolidate. Gerard will arrange to meet with Friends Group members to discuss what the best plan of attack is. A trial period will commence on Sunday 1st September and continue 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday monthly through to December 2013. Please support Gerard on the 1st September all welcome Phone 97872507.

BANOOL RESERVE 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday  
mthly 10am - 12. Ross 9785 1243



### Equipment to loan

Weed burning is better than using herbicide. Recent studies are showing bee colonies are affected by herbicide use therefore the Committee has decided members may borrow our Weed burner. Gerard McDonald has kindly offered to demonstrate its use for those who do wish to borrow the weed burner. Phone Gerard on 9787 2507