

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

Mount Eliza Association for Environmental Care

March 2014 Newsletter

ABN 64 566 184 275 ASN A0018210M

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Our Annual General Meeting April 15th 2014

Guest Speaker Dr Ken Walker

MEAFEC is pleased to advise Dr Ken Walker Senior Curator of Entomology and Arachnology at Museum Victoria will be our guest speaker at our AGM. Dr Walker and his colleagues are endeavouring to build up the Museum's collection in areas that were previously under represented. This is being done through field trips, purchases and donations, as well as exchanges with other institutions.

The Museums insect and spider collection is used extensively for research by scientists from a variety of institutions. The collection is also used for identification purposes by doctors, pathologists, local councils, public health departments, Quarantine, Customs and pest companies. These groups come to the museum for guidance in identifying bugs that are causing material damage or health problems.

Dr Walker's current research centres on the native Australian bee fauna and the role these bees play in the pollination of native and introduced plants. There are 2000 different Australian Native bees and Dr Walkers talk will include many interesting facts and pictures about native bees and there role in our bushland reserves and gardens.

It is not often that someone with Dr Walker's expertise can be heard in our local area. We hope you will come along to hear this informative talk and slide show. Friends and family are also most welcome to this special event. We look forward to seeing you at the Mt Eliza bowling Club on Tue April 15th at 7:30 pm, supper will be provided.



Evaluation of Tree Die-back in Mt Eliza

As presented by Geoff Carr from Ecology Australia

Minutes of Community meeting held December 11th 2013 at the Mt Eliza Community Hall (Approximately 30 attended)

Simon Thorning MPSC introduced Geoff Carr who presented a slideshow on the Die-back of trees in Mt Eliza.

Surveys of possums were carried out by Bernadette Schmidt and Darren Quinn, whilst Geoff and Fiona Sutton researched and formed the slideshow.

Geoff's commencement point was to investigate the tree decline and possum populations at 5 sites in Mt Eliza.

This was carried out using the below methods:

- Two bushland area's one affected and one un-affected. *However it was hard to find an unaffected area.*
- One residential area away from bushland
- Literature was also reviewed both published and unpublished
- Tree and vegetation surveys were taken
- And possum surveys

5 study areas were settled upon as listed below:

- Moorooduc Quarry reserve
- Banool Reserve
- Lorikeet Reserve
- Earimil & Jesse White Reserves
- Alison Road & Old Mornington Road

Transects in each of these areas were 50 x 10 metres wide with 2 per reserve.

- Plant species were noted along with origin status (indigenous or exotic)
- Age class
- Canopy structure/ distribution
- Alive or dead
- Observations indicating possum damage
- Scoring for defoliation attributed to possums (scored 1 to 5)
- Scoring for defoliation attributed to invertebrates (scored 1 to 5)
- Pathogens present or not (fungal)

Methods were: possum survey's, counting of approximately 40% of Reserve area

Species and number of possums noted

Location along transect (by GPS co-ordinate)

Tree species where possums were sighted & canopy health scored (1 to 5)/ observations of behaviour & health.

Results from these observations of vegetation condition were:

1. Widespread & severe decline & death of Manna gums, Swamp gums, Narrow-leaf peppermint and Snow gums in all Reserves & residential areas
2. Degraded vegetation quality
3. Almost no recruitment of young eucalyptus trees
4. Tree health patchy in some reserves

The North West corner of Moorooduc quarry is dead and had been surveyed by Ecology Australia in 1985 when cinnamon rot was an issue. A theory for this area being in alarming condition was, it being at the top, it had less rain and water seepage sitting by comparison to the lower reaches of the Quarry area.

Results: Causes of the Die-back:

- Little evidence of die-back caused by factors other than possum browsing
- Abundant evidence of possum damage in residential gardens
- Protecting street trees with guards has led to rapid recovery of trees (epicormic shoots)
- Prognosis for tree populations in Mt Eliza is bleak

It was noted that when there was a sparse understorey there was less possums.

Possible Management Options:

- DEPI approvals
- Exclusion by guarding
- Habitat Modification, reduction of understorey and removal of nesting boxes
- Population control, culling or reproductive control

At the conclusion of the Slideshow the floor was opened for general discussion on the issue -here are some of the comments made:

- *Carol suggested:* Peninsula Wide article on possums to make residents aware of the issue and not to feed them etc.
- *Gerard offered:* Sages Road mid storey taken out therefore possum problems reduced
- *Ann noted:* Increase in dray's on her property where there is a tea-tree mid storey
- *Otto suggested:* Fertilizing trees for recovery and educating residents on what to grow
- *Mal suggested:* Removal of under storey weeds
- *Woodland resident noted:* That all her garden plants had been decimated by possums
- *Kunyung PS resident noted:* Trees dying but ironbark ok
- *Gillard's Road resident noted:* That she had an influx of possums as clearing was done by neighbours
- *Hans offered:* Figures on fox scat findings showed only 7% were possum
- *Jeff Yugovic spoke at length but believes the cat curfew meant there were no predators of possums and perhaps planting she-oaks rather eucalyptus could be the answer. Jo will follow up with the Frankston council where there is **not** a cat curfew to see if possums are present.*
- *The Wildlife Shelter* provided information that 98% of ringtail patients were because of cat attack

The meeting concluded with MPSC Simon suggesting another meeting when the final report is handed in.

Overall residents were pleased with work being carried out by the shire and hope many of the suggestions will aid finding a solution to the problem.

Williams Road Beach Site

The Friends of Williams Road Beach would like to thank Simon Thorning for organising the incorporation of the 5 metres strip, above the Williams to Jacksons Road access track, into the foreshore reserve. This land, the open space component associated with the subdivision of the Mt. Eliza Centre, will enable the Friends, Scouts and the community to broaden the habitat corridor.

To this end, Scouts, Toorak College and Friends will be involved in a range of activities, including the propagation and planting of 800 Coastal Headland Scrub plants. This will include a Scout Group planting day on Saturday 23 August. It is hoped that all 195 Scouts will be involved.

Any MEAFEC members wishing to support this planting day, and its many associated activities, would be warmly welcomed. Please contact Ann or just turn up on the day.

This event will replace the usual "Winter Weed War". In addition to this change, the Friends have altered their meeting frequency and will now meet weekly - Fridays, April to mid-October. Come along and enjoy lunch in the newly renovated scout hall, complete with sea views and a great crew of friendly workers.

Friends Groups



FIRESTATION GARDEN 3rd Sunday
monthly 9:30am till 10:30am



EARIMIL Creek 3rd Saturday
monthly 9:30am till 11:30am.



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



WILLIAMS ROAD BEACH Friday
weekly 10am-3pm Ann9787 7228



MEAFEC organised 2 sites for the Clean-up Australia Day event this year. One at Earimil point or the unique Buruk Bunun coves! Led by Jeff Yugovic this site attracted 16 people and collected eight bags of rubbish. They all enjoyed themselves with picture perfect weather.

The other clean up site was at the Gunyong Creek Mouth and along the beach towards Osprey Avenue. Simone Merrett had this site all to herself but did a tremendous job collecting and sorting rubbish.

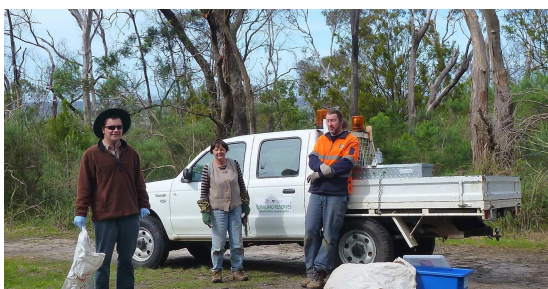


MEAFEC thanks all those people who took the time to make Mt Eliza's coastline look beautiful. Well Done!

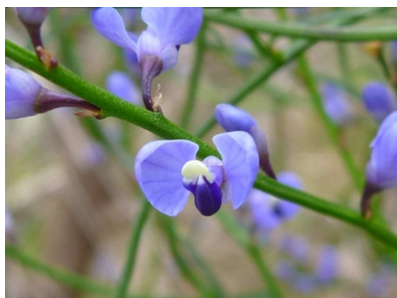
Mt Eliza Secondary College Update

The college and the Education Department have been slow in responding to our letters of concern regarding the fate of the cleared area. We are still pursuing this matter.

MOOROODUC QUARRY meets 4th Sunday of
each month from 10:00am to Noon. Call
Gerard on 9787 2507.



VICTORY RESERVE 3rd Sunday
monthly from 1 to 4pm. Call
Gerard 9787 2507



BANOOL RESERVE 2nd Sunday
mthly 10am - 12. Ross 9785 1243

