



Earthcare News

We do what we can, where we are

FEB - MAR
2004

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GUEST SPEAKER

Matt Green

Chief Executive Officer of

'The Natural Step' in Australia



Matt will talk about what Natural Step in Australia is hoping to achieve – please see article below

Thursday 26 February 2004

7 for 7.30pm

AT THE

ECOCENTRE

55a Blessington St, St Kilda

ALL WELCOME – PLEASE BRING YOUR FRIENDS

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

NATURAL STEP - www.naturalstep.org

The Natural Step provides a simple framework for understanding the complex issues associated with true sustainability and real actions to move towards sustainability.

In 1989, Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt founded The Natural Step organization. A leading Swedish Oncologist, Dr. Robèrt observed a significant increase in childhood leukemia cases, and traced the cause to increasing toxins in the environment due to human production processes. Concerned that so much of the environmental debate was focused on the effects of current methods of producing goods, he founded The Natural Step to address the systemic causes of environmental problems.

With the help of 50 Swedish scientists, Dr. Robèrt developed a consensus document that

described the basic knowledge of the earth's functions and how humans interact with it. The document went through 21 iterations, and upon completion was sent to every household and school in Sweden.

In the early 1990s, Dr. Robèrt worked with physicist, John Holmberg to define a set of guiding principles for a sustainable society that are based on the laws of thermodynamics and natural cycles. These principles of sustainability are the foundation of The Natural Step's content and approach. Today The Natural Step is an international, not-for-profit organisation that operates in 10 countries. More than 70 municipalities and international corporations including BHP Billiton, Orica, Home Depot, IKEA, and MacDonalds Sweden have applied The Natural Step Framework.

PLANTING CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT/TIME	CONTACT	LOCATION/COMMENTS
Sunday 22 February	9.30am – 12 noon	Friends of Port Melbourne Foreshore Janet Bolitho Ph 9645 2269	Perce White Reserve (Melways 56G3)
Thursday 11 March	9am to 3pm - Planting with Japanese students from Melbourne University	Park Community Association John Addie Ph: 9696 2043	Meet in Albert Park near the Junction Oval, Fitzroy Street St Kilda (Melway B58 B8)
Sunday 21 March	10am – 3pm	Friends of Westgate Park George Fotheringham Ph 9428 4820	Meet at the noticeboard near Todd Road carpark (Melways 56 F1)
Saturday 27 March	9.30am – 12 noon	Friends of Port Melbourne Foreshore Janet Bolitho Ph 9645 2269	Perce White Reserve (Melways 56G3)
Sunday 28 March	10 am to 2 pm Planting	Park Community Association John Addie 9696 2043	Meet in Albert Park near the Junction Oval, Fitzroy Street St Kilda (Melway B58 B8)
Sunday 18 April	10am – 3pm	Friends of Westgate Park George Fotheringham Ph 9428 4820	Meet at the noticeboard near Todd Road carpark (Melways 56 F1)
Sunday 25 April	9.30am – 12 noon	Friends of Port Melbourne Foreshore Janet Bolitho Ph 9645 2269	Perce White Reserve (Melways 56G3)

MEETING TO DISCUSS THE CHANNEL DEEPENING PROJECT

"The Victorian Government and the Port of Melbourne Corporation is currently examining a proposal to deepen the shipping channels to allow the larger container ships to enter the port. Preliminary studies assessing technical, environmental and economic impacts demonstrated that:

- channel deepening would provide significant economic benefits to Victoria
- failing to deepen the channel could result in considerable loss of trade to other ports in Australia
- there are no technical impediments, and
- possible environmental impacts could be minimised.

More detailed investigations and an Environmental Effects Statement are currently underway. These investigations include extensive community consultation and detailed technical and financial studies". (Source: Port of Melbourne website).

Last year, Earthcare hosted a public information night with speakers from the Port of Melbourne Corporation, regarding the proposed Channel Deepening Project. We have ongoing concerns about the potential impacts of the channel deepening and dredging on the ecosystems of Port Phillip Bay in general and on St. Kilda Harbour and the Little Penguin colony in particular. Things are moving along and we are holding a meeting of interested members and supporters to discuss these issues on **Friday the 20 February, 7 – 8pm at the EcoCentre.**

For more information, check out relevant websites, such as the Port of Melbourne website <http://www.portofmelbourne.com> and the Port Phillip Conservation Council website <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~phillip/> We hope to see you on the 20th Jo Samuel-King and and Sue Pennicuik

POOPING PENGUINS A FAECAL ATTRACTION ... ABC online

A pair of German scientists have become early frontrunners for the 2004 "Ig Nobels" - annual awards handed out for eccentric research, thanks to their work in calculating the pooping power of penguins. These flightless birds are known to expel their faeces with great force in order to prevent their waste from fouling their feathers and their nests.

Victor Benno Meyer-Rochow and Jozsef Gal of International University Bremen have now figured out the amount of rectal pressure required by the birds to perform this feat, New Scientist magazine has reported. The duo spent their time observing and photographing chinstrap and Adelie penguins as they did their business. The calculations factored in vital data such as the size and viscosity of the faeces, as well as the trajectory and distance - up to 40 centimetres from the nest, taken by the

expelled matter. "The researchers estimate that the birds generate pressures of up to 60 kilopascals, more than half normal atmospheric pressure and more than four times the peak squeeze typically exerted by humans," the British weekly said. However, it also said "to what use this information will be put is unclear".



ST KILDA PENGUIN NEWS

The penguin research team have been taking a close look at the statistics of the collected data for the last three years. A booklet will soon be published but until that time here is an estimate of the penguin population. There was a large increase in untagged penguins this year causing higher numbers in the resident population. (They must have thought they had better get into St Kilda before property prices rose any higher.)

- 2001-2002 465 penguins
- 2002-2003 460 penguins
- 2003-2004 560 penguins



FRIENDS OF PORT MELBOURNE

INVITE YOU TO A MEETING ON

THE MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PESTS AND DOMESTIC BALLAST WATER IN VICTORIA

Thursday, 19 February 8 pm
Sandridge Centre (off Tucker Ave)
Port Melbourne

Queries/replies to Janet Bolitho on 9645 2269
jbolitho@optusnet.com.au

S.K.I.N.C. IS PRESENTING A AN EDUCATION TALK ON ...

"Gardening with dry tolerant (xeriscape) indigenous plants". Information will be presented on choosing the right indigenous plants and appropriate gardening techniques to establish a water saving indigenous garden in your home. People will also have the opportunity to purchase plants on the day.

WHEN: Saturday February 21 1pm

WHERE: S.K.I.N.C. Indigenous Nursery
525 Williamstown Rd, Port Melbourne, 3207

COST : Gold coin donation

PORT PHILLIP NATURE WATCH



Grey teal family

In the last Newsletter I reported that the visiting duck species have now entirely left our area due to recent winter and spring rains making more

bodies of water available elsewhere in the state. Well as it turns out I was almost correct, but not quite. A week after I wrote that PPNW article in November I was happily proven wrong when I discovered that a pair of **Grey Teal** had remained in Elwood Canal to successfully raise five ducklings. It is assumed they must have been nesting somewhere upstream, probably in Elsternwick Golf Course. The whole family frequently swam to the lower sections of the canal (Addison St – Marine Parade) to feed on sea lettuce and other plants at low tide as shown in the photo (taken in November 2003).

early December while walking along the canal looking for Rakali. I saw the Grey Teal slowly making their way up the canal for the night, when a Rakali heading down stream swam into their midst. Absolute commotion broke loose - the birds initially panicked and scattered in all directions, but shortly after the two parent birds racked up some courage and attacked the Rakali with vigor to protect the ducklings. Needless to say the Rakali took off in fright and was not seen again. Rakali are known to eat small birds such as ducklings, so the Teal need to be defensive.

When last observed in mid January the ducklings were fully-grown and hard to distinguish from their parents. It is interesting to note the Grey Teal breeding in Elwood Canal, as their typical habitat is inland lakes and dams in fresh rather than brackish or salty water, which is the preferred habitat of their close relative, the Chestnut Teal also seen in Elwood Canal.

Also I am happy to report that the **Tawny Frogmouths** are still with us in the old near dead pine tree in the St Kilda Botanical

Gardens raising a further two chicks. I have gone out for walks in the early evening to watch the birds depart from the old pine and go hunting for food, frequently in the indigenous garden area near the gate at the southwest corner of the Botanical Gardens. They typically sit quietly on a branch of one of the old gums waiting to dive down and capture any insects, spiders or snails moving on the ground below for an early evening meal. They will not take any good meals in the air, as I found out after an emperor gum moth flew past one bird.

Over the summer period there have not been many reports coming in. The most interesting is from Maggie Allman who reported seeing a pair of **Black-winged Stilts** at the mouth of Cowderoy Ck, West Beach on 29 December. In November she saw an owl on two occasions in Alma Park, but could not identify the species. I replied suggesting it was most likely a Boobook or possibly a Barn Owl. I also suggested it might be a Tawny Frogmouth. If so it would be interesting to find out if these birds are roosting in a pine tree and possibly breeding in these gardens as well.

Barry Hart reported seeing a range of common bird species at his residence in Westbury St, St Kilda East and nearby in Alma Park. They include Little Wattlebirds, Rainbow Lorikeets, pigeons, Indian Mynas and occasional Magpies and Ravens. While these species are all common, it is still interesting to receive the report as it gives us an idea of the range of bird species (or lack of it) seen in a particular area. This in turn helps us understand the level of fauna biodiversity within parts of City of Port Phillip not frequently surveyed. If anyone observes other species in the St Kilda East area, which I am not familiar with, please let me know.

If you see any wildlife no matter how insignificant they may appear to you, please send in or email a report. I can be contacted on 9531 2270, or email amccutcheon@melb.globaldial.com

Andrew McCutcheon



**PO Box 287
Elwood
VIC 3184**

**Phone:
0500 832 784**

MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL FORM

Membership of Earthcare St. Kilda Inc. is per calendar year, February to January.

Membership helps to support Earthcare projects and includes a bi-monthly newsletter and information about coming events.

I wish to join Earthcare St. Kilda Inc.

\$10 Student/Concession

\$20 individual

\$30 family

I wish to make a donation \$......

Please return completed form to PO Box 287 Elwood 3184

Name.....New Renewal

Address.....

Suburb/City.....P/Code.....

Phone Number.....email.....

I would like to receive my newsletter by email YES / NO

My special interest is.....

How did you hear about us?.....

EARTHCARE EMAIL ADDRESS

earthcare@wecare.au.com

Please note that even though it looks a little strange the au and .com are in the correct order

We're on the Web - See us at:

www.vicnet.net.au/~earthcare

Print Post: 343396/OOO13

If undeliverable, please return to:

The Secretary

Earthcare St Kilda Inc

PO Box 287

ELWOOD

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