



The Greater  
Dandenong  
Environment  
Group Inc.

February 2001

It's that time of the month when I bore you with my ravings.

First of all I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Australia Day festivities. From the people who found out prices for the lolly bag fillers to the members who manned the stall on the day, it was a great effort. I have only had feedback from one member of the public but he was rapt. From the colouring in to the show bags he thought that it was imaginative and relevant to our group and the show bags were like the cream on the top. He was greatly impressed. All we needed was the weather, which we didn't get but I understand that our tent became a haven especially for families and as such was greatly appreciated. Thanks everyone for such a great effort.

For those of you with children, there are some show bags left over and they can probably be collected at the next meeting.

The holidays are over and things are slipping back to the old routine again. I went to the Little River Earth Sanctuaries site and found that there had been a large grass fire. They had slashed the grass to make a fire break and the slasher had started a fire, which took twenty CFA units and two helicopters to control. We disturbed some mouse-like creatures when we were clearing weeds on a hill. So the following week I went over a day earlier than usual and set some traps. From ten traps I caught four critters and they were mice. I could smell them as soon as I picked up the traps. I released them but once the weeds are cleared their chances will be minimal because one thing that area doesn't lack is birds of prey. The site is steadily improving; the fence around zone one is finished and the feral eradicator is busily decreasing the rabbit population. More fence lines are graded and the electrification of the feral proof fence is ready to proceed. The feral eradicator reckons that Little River has the worst infestation of rabbits that he has ever seen and what was estimated to be a two week job will need two or three months. They believe that there are six hundred warrens in zone one alone. Having been there I can appreciate the effect that rabbits have on the environment.

The Field Naturalists club is busy as always. Their latest field trip to King Lake was great. They worked in one of Melbourne Water's closed catchment areas. There was an aqueduct, which collected water from the hill, that took over half an hour to drive along. It was lined with granite blocks and was constructed by thirty Italian stone masons many years ago who quarried the blocks and constructed the aqueduct. We had several restrictions placed on us like going to the toilet - one had to be transported out to a toilet if you had to go.

We were there for Australia Day and so had the ideal opportunity to see the catchment in action.

We took the Anabat system that the group contributed to on the trip and we were able to add some bat calls to our library. One has to build up a library of calls for comparison and we now have several. At the end of March there will be a bat night with the Friends of Eummemering Creek. If you are interested please let me know. They are fascinating creatures. Anything that can catch its food in the dark while flying has to have something going for it. At the moment it's on the program for the last Saturday in the month. I have to leave space for the Australia Day reporter. Our workdays are on Thursday morning 10am –1pm and the last Sunday in the month 9am-12pm. Anything else, phone me on 9795 7423.