



**The Greater
Dandenong
Environment
Group Inc.**

Ao030369s

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The Scoresby Freeway

As most of you will know, the State Labor Government has decided to build the Scoresby freeway. I've spoken to many people of various interests in the environmental movement and the consensus of opinion is that this is one of the greatest betrayals of the environment ever perpetrated by a Labor government. It is estimated that it will increase greenhouse emissions by 18.5% at a time when everything from the melting of the polar ice caps, the fires in the USA to our present drought are being blamed on the greenhouse effect. Not to mention locking in so much of the public's assets into roads when the price of petrol is going to increase, instead using them to provide alternative transport options. One could go on ad infinitum, or perhaps ad nauseum would be more appropriate. Most of us have such a deep sense of let down that just they can't be bothered. The political scene could get more interesting in the future now that the Labor Government has adopted the other major parties' development at any costs policies. The folks who actually worry about the future of the world and us will need new candidates to vote for. But these are only my opinions.

Now on to the nice things

Donations

We recently donated a worm farm to our recycling company to give to an old people's home in Keysborough.

We donated to a fund set up by Birds Australia (formerly RAOU) to purchase a station in the Northern Territory. I know someone who recently visited the property and their verdict was that it was fabulous, many parts of it were pristine. The Victorian Field Naturalists Club may run a field trip to there next year. A trip not to be missed - watch this space or join the Field Nats!

We are also purchasing two CDs of Wild Animals of Victoria. These will go to the Council's Open Space Planner June Ernst to present to the two Secondary Colleges that have assisted with the planting of Greaves Reserve.

We also donated to the environmental education program of Lyndale Primary School. The Mayor presented the cheque for us. Unfortunately she made quite a speech criticizing

SOCOG. She had a bee in her bonnet about the lack of co-operation during the torch relay. This went down like a lead balloon with those present but eventually she got to the point and did the presentation. This went towards an incursion by Graham Clutterbuck of Wildlife Encounters. Because of our donation the cost to the students was only \$1.50. Due to the financial demands on parents even in the state system, our contribution was greatly appreciated.

I took some books that my son didn't need to the school on the Thursday after the presentation, and met a very happy school principal who was very impressed with Graham's display and also his method of enthusing the students. Of course I was very soon up to my elbows in stuffed animals and was appointed as keeper of the Carpet Python. I wish that I was eloquent enough to describe the changing emotions on a child's face when they meet a snake close up for the first time. Fear is often apparent but, when you are standing there with the creature wrapped around your arm with no obvious discomfort, curiosity usually gets the better of them. Even some of the teachers were very wary but as with the kids once they had stroked the tail end, they were soon over any misapprehensions that they may have had.

It was something that teachers must experience often where they are trying to teach something and there is a gradual awareness creeping over a student's face. The whole school had a fantastic time and the kids were rapt. I wish more of you could have seen it.

Four of us went on the Field Nat's Lyrebird walk in Sherbrooke Forest. It was led by Jack Dinkgrieve, the Head Ranger of Dandenong Ranges National Park. He didn't find us any Lyrebirds, although we heard some, but it was a pleasure to be in the forest with such a knowledgeable and dedicated naturalist. We had a walk with Jack until lunchtime then he had to leave us but he suggested that we try a different section of the park after lunch. We found the area without a problem and started the walk. The birds amongst us were soon spotting Shrike Tits and Thick-billed Scrub Wrens. The Red-browed Treecreepers were doing what they do best - it was magic. Further along the track we found two young male Lyrebirds (actually Dorothy found them, we were all looking the other way). They called to each other and did their shimmering display several times as we tracked them along the path. We finally reached the top of a hill and, as we decided that we would turn back, there was a Wombat munching on the vegetation. We watched it for a while and went home quite content, feeling that it was a worthwhile day out.

The Field Nat's trip to Dutson Downs was a mixed weekend. We had at least 10 students from Swinburne with us. This meant that there were about 20 participants, which meant that things were a bit crowded at times. Trapping results were not great with about 4 *Antichinus* caught. The trapping highlight was a young Bandicoot caught by the Swinburne students. I had 2 highlights - we found the biggest Koala that I've ever seen while spotlighting and we found a Wedge-tailed Eagle's nest and saw an Eagle fly from it, so it could be a current one.

As you can see, life is pretty slow but I've managed to fit in a few plantings at Greaves Reserve lately and will probably be at Tirhatuan Park this weekend, 26th Aug.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Ian.

What's on;

Our usual thursday nursery working bees will continue this month 10am –1 pm
At Greaves St.

26th Aug Sat 1-00pm to 3-00pm Planting Day at Tirhatuan Park. Stud Rd end

31st Aug Thurs 8-00pm Australian Plant Society talk on “Landscape Design”
Springvale Civic Centre Meeting Room (Mel 80 A11)

2nd Sept Sat 1-00pm to 3-00pm Springvale Sth Reserve. Mackay St. Meet at Alex Wilkie
Nature Reserve

5th Sept Tues 8-00pm Field Naturalists Club of Vic. Talk “ New Holland Mouse’

9/10 Sept Friends of the Prom . Track building, partying, what more can I say!.

16/17th Sept FNCV Trip to Melville Caves area. Usual trapping . spotlighting etc

17th Sept Sun 11-am 1pm. Fotheringham Reserve meet Cnr Alexander Ave and Alsace
St.

24th Sept Sun 9 am –12 pm group nursery working bee come and see our plants.

30th Sept FNCV Stag watch and spotlight for Possums and Owls.