



1<sup>ST</sup> PLENTY



## A Quality Lesson in Water Quality for 1<sup>st</sup> Plenty Cubs

On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2008 the Cubs from 1<sup>st</sup> Plenty Scouts, two leaders and five parents went on a three hour Diamond Creek Water Watch bike riding tour. It was a 12 km return trip led by Marine experts Julia and Karen from Water Watch Port Philip Region. The event was paid for by Nillumbik Council.

The tour started at the Community Environment Centre at Edendale Farm in Eltham. It proceeded south along the bike track to a spot below the Bridge Street bridge. This is where we took our first water samples. We measured water temperature at 12 degrees Celsius, conductance (salt content) was fair, and turbidity (mudiness) was declined.



*Collecting water samples from Diamond Creek*

The tour carried on past the Eltham Leisure Centre to Barak Bushlands, named after an elder in the area from the Wurundjeri tribe. This formerly unused marshland, has been transformed to a picturesque wetland and bushland by volunteers who meet every second Sunday in the month. Water samples taken from this site revealed the existence of invertebrates like leeches, freshwater snails, and the wetlands is also home to other animals like snakes and frogs.



The tour continued on the track past the Eltham Lower Park, through Lenister Farm to the Observation Platform where the Diamond Creek enters the Yarra River. What a great spot, and one of such cultural significance to the Wurundjeri people who



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performed ceremonies on this special site. Further water samples were taken from the Yarra River. Its temperature was 13.8 degrees Celsius, its conductance or salt content was good, and better than the Diamond Creek, and its turbidity was declined but marginally better than that of the Diamond Creek. The invertebrates seen in the water samples taken here were more extensive. Viewings included freshwater shrimps and bugs like water boatmen indicating reasonable water quality. Other life observed like mosquito fish are considered more of a pest than an indicator of water quality.



*Collecting water samples from the Yarra*

The children loved the exercise, looking for marine wildlife and they learnt about the



*Julia from Waterwatch explaining why the water colour in the Yarra is different in different areas*



*Collecting samples of invertebrates*

importance of vegetation to stop erosion and to hence improve turbidity, and the effects of storm water on water salinity. It was a highly enjoyable, and educational experience.

We all pedalled all the way back to Edendale Farm non stop, for a healthy but hearty lunch.

Thank you to Nillumbik Council and the 1<sup>st</sup> Plenty Cub Leaders.

By Jasna Bruce mother of Cub Isabelle Bruce