

Welcome

Welcome to the October Newsletter.

Our next meeting is on Monday October 5, we have a guest speaker, details below.

The monthly working bee will be on Sunday October 4 at the Owl Land, parking is available across the road at Pembroke. Please bring protective clothing and drinking water.



Guest Speaker

We will be having a guest speaker to speak at our October meeting.

Ann Isaacs, formally from Melbourne Water, now with Yarra Valley Water.

She will be talking about their campaign to encourage residents to connect to sewage, from their septic tanks .

Sightings

We still have wombats here in Mt Evelyn.

Last night my local friendly wombat dug a hole under my fence and came visiting. When he had spent enough time here he then dug about ten holes under the fence until he finally decided the best spot was under my back gate.

This morning I discovered his excavations and then had to fill in his holes.

Living with wildlife is interesting

Also have a pair of black ducks who have taken up residence in my pond. Mr Duck spends his time protecting the pond for his mate.

They have decided my name is Mrs Dinner Bowl and whenever I appear they come quacking up to me for a feed.

Orchid news

There are many beautiful native Orchids popping their colourful heads up on the Owl land. Nodding Green Hooks, Spider Orchids, Donkey Orchids, Bird Orchids, Sun Orchids and lots more. Grevillia Alpina is also showing its splendid colour at the moment.

There are lots of Sundews, Sassafrass, Milkmaids and many more beautiful native flowers. It's well worth taking the time to have a look.

Bushfire bulletin

There have been many meetings regarding Bush Fire preparedness. Franc has been to all but the amount of work to do in 30 days is just staggering and will not be finished by this Fire Season – that's acknowledged. Too many committees and not enough understanding (or reading) of what the Bush Fire Royal Commission 'Interim Report' (BFRC/IR) actually stated has created many problems.

It is a very complex and lengthy document which is easily misinterpreted because it has spawned a whole new lot of buzzwords and acronyms which in itself is contrary to the recommendation to use ..'plain English'..

By the end of October we should see the roll out of the TSP's (Township Safety Plans) which will also see the DNSP's (or NSP's) depending on whoever's report you are reading (Designated Neighbourhood Safer Places which has now been shortened to 'Neighbourhood Safer Places') agreed on by another... "Committee" These are Not Fire Refuges but are ...'POLAR's ('Places of Last Resort') when a persons Fire Plan (if they have one) suddenly goes pear shaped and they have to find a safer place quickly.

The 'Third Tier' of this overall plan is also to have PDSP's (Privately Determined Safer Places) which will demand a whole new set of Community Education Materials be prepared, written, printed and distributed. At present the Criteria for all these 'places' is still being addressed but a lot of the Core Information has already been revealed in the BFRC/IR.

MEEPPA have standing on the MFPC (Municipal Fire Prevention Committee) and BI (Burning Issues) through the TRG (Technical Reference group) which helped frame the Local Burning Law.

CFA Support

Earlier this year MEEPPA were keen to support the Local CFA volunteers and Franc has helped a number of individuals in the Shire gain standing at the Royal Commission. In addition to this it was always our intention to donate a worthwhile sum of money which will be formally arranged at Octobers Meeting. To that end Franc has had discussions with David Bruce and Alicia Morris at the 'Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre' (BCRC) which was created in 2003 after the Canberra Fires, involves every Fire Agency throughout Australia and New Zealand and is at the forefront of Fire Research in many areas of our interest, bio diversity, vegetation and they generally work very closely with many land management agencies in the environment. It is now on the Register of Environmental Organisations with the Commonwealth Govts. Dept of Environment. We can elect an area which we would like researched. They had suggested restoration of cleared area after weed removal with low inflammable native regenerative species but Franc has requested fauna behaviour and refuge in wildfire settings which has never been adequately researched. He has suggested a \$500 donation. In addition, along with Barry Marshal's resolution earlier this year he has suggested a \$500 donation to the local CFA to help towards the local brigades Fund Raising Sale on October 10th. in recognition of their services to the Community for their efforts through the Black Saturday fires campaign.

Mt Evelyn Street Party

MEEPPA will be having a stall at this years Mt Evelyn Street Party. We have a site booked and are looking for people to help set up and look after the stall during the event. If anyone would like to help you can call Clare on 9736 3864. The fair is on Saturday 24th October running from 10am to 3pm.

Introducing little Master Haig

Master Haig left the safety of his hollow on 24 September, just before the major rains and wild weather of the last week.

I had thought that this pair had not been successful this year as I had seen both parents out of the hollow in the two weeks prior to Master Haig's appearance, so you can imagine my joy when I spotted him on a tree last monday

He is doing well and gaining in confidence each day

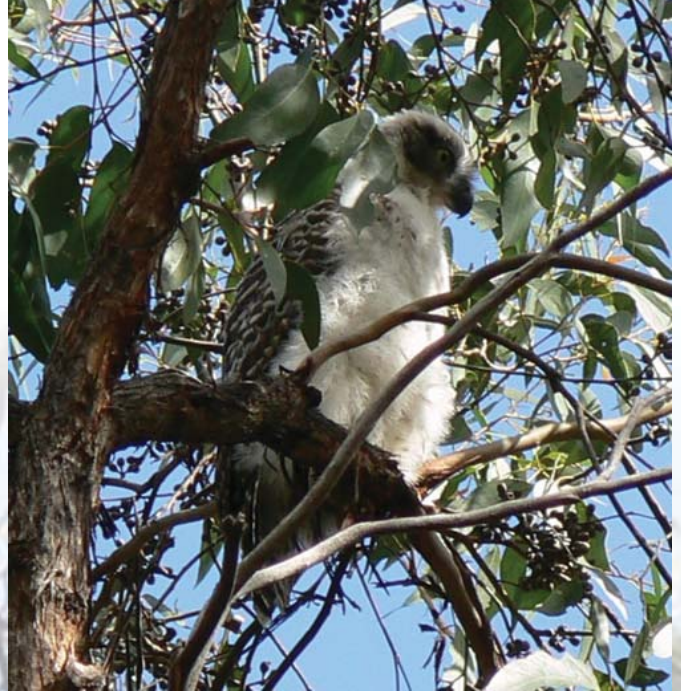
Hoping for similar news from both Quinn reserve and The Mt Evelyn Rec Reserve



Master Haig

Hello I'm a new arrival and Mount Evelyn's newest citizen. I think they call me 'Haigh' and I've just met my first two hoo!mans and they seem to like me but Mum & Dad told me that these are just the nice ones. Dad says that they're always creeping around down below wanting to help us even though the old 'White Beard' one smells funny when he climbs up to look at us and then falls down again – why cant he use his wings? Then the smaller one talks that funny language? I know I'm a baby but all that kitchy kitchy hoo stuff just doesn't work for me. Mum said that these people are from a tribe called 'The Meeppa' and that they make sure the bush we live in is always kept safe. They're here in the sun, when it's raining and even shining big bright 'eyes' around us during our waking time when it's dark. I've seen other hoomans who ride these fast things through the bush and make lots of noise. Mum said she nearly left home without me because she likes a quiet neighbourhood but just lately these new monsters called 'Shamesaws' have started and are allowed to cut down all our bush for 30 metres. We cant live without trees and Dad cant 'cook' dinner if they keep cutting down all the bushes. I think Mum said she got remarried this year but Dad's really kooool. I don't have any brothers or sisters because Dad thought it would be best only to have me this year coz from the time I was sloshing around in an egg the house has been shaking backwards and forwards every day for months. Before the big 'Shake' Mum and Dad said one day the sky turned red and then it turned black like our waking time but at the wrong time of day? That was on a black Saturday and Mum and Dad said they haven't seen any of my Uncles, Aunts or Cousins since that day and just cant figure it out? It's just like they all disappeared?

Now Mum and Dad are very worried about this big Big BIG Tower they want to build on top of the hill so that hoomans can hoot at each other through a little black box called a 'mobile', and it doesn't even move? Dad says that he is worried about the Big 'Hum' that will start when it is built and we might be forced to leave home quickly because the tower will be built on top of a place of learning? All of my ancestors, in the stories I have been told of the 'Faraway Times', were symbols for learning so even though we only have feathers on our outside at least we don't have them inside our heads like the people on top of our hill.



Thank you to 'The Meeppa' especially the 'Kitchy Hoo Hoo' lady and the old 'White Beard', the Shire of Yarra Ranges Environment Department especially 'Gaye' and 'Simone', that other important hooman who has no feathers left on his head, Alan from DSE and Ed from ARI. I'm just so excited to be here! Thank you every(b)one for allowing me to be born here.

Will Mum and Dad be allowed to still stay here when I have flown or will we be the last of our kind in this area?

'Haigh' is the only Owl to be born for the Mount Evelyn Owl Lands and ALL other Owl Core Nesting Areas this year and might be the last. It's time to stop all the nonsense. Mount Evelyn has/had(?) the only dedicated Powerful Owl Reserve in the world. It's time now for the people of Mount Evelyn, The Shire Council in total who should admit to the mistake of one of it's officers, the Education Department, the State and Federal Members of Parliament and the people in general to DECIDE what they truly want. A critically rare and vulnerable Bird of Prey, second only to the Wedge Tailed Eagle, which is/was the symbol of this town and whose numbers measured 'less than 500 breeding pairs' * BEFORE 'Black Saturday'.

OR

Just another Mobile Telephone Tower which on present evidence will have its maximum impact (at 200 metres) on the whole of the Owl Lands and which WILL disturb their Flight Paths, their Feeding Range and their Total Habitat which is STILL protected under a Zoological & Environmental Overlay, not to mention the 10/30 clearing rights recently announced.

It's not too late to still say 'NO' now. Tomorrow will be far too late!