

# Swan Bay Environment Association Inc.



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## NEWSLETTER NO. 61–October 2012

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### Apologies

The SBEA Committee would like to apologize for the lack of newsletters this year. Unfortunately it has not been a smooth transition to find someone to take over from Jill's great and reliable work. Hopefully, this edition of the newsletter will mark a turning point, and we can get back on track with regular editions.

### Nursery Report

All the large plant orders (over 5000) for 2012 have now been dispatched and growing of new stock is continuing for next year. Jacquie has prepared a list of plants by type for a handout at the Nursery and this has been added to the website. Jill is continuing work on the database of plants grown at the Nursery.

### Website

In case you have not looked at our website for a while or forgotten the site address, here it is.

< <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sbea/> >

It really is a great site, maintained for us by Doug Miller. Take a look and browse around.

### Greeting Cards

The Nursery has a selection of beautiful cards for sale. The cards depict a range of Australian native flowers using the images of Eril Deighton. The cards are blank inside and so they are perfect for all occasions. They cost \$2 each, some of which is donated to SBEA.

### Lake Victoria and the proposed Lonsdale Golf Course Redevelopment

*- reprinted with the kind permission from the Geelong Environment Council (GEC).*

2012 has started with a major Planning Panel for the Lonsdale Golf Club being held in Geelong. The proposal to upgrade the golf course by re-configuring most of the holes, having an area of the existing course fronting Fellows Road rezoned for a 100 lot housing estate, and developing four new holes in existing wetlands, ponds and saltmarsh areas adjacent to Lake Victoria, has caused great concern and opposition amongst environment group both regional and Birdlife Australia which is a national organisation.

Lake Victoria is a major wetland and important component of the wetlands which comprise the Swan Bay section of the Western Shores of Port Phillip Bay and Bellarine Peninsular Ramsar site. Lake Victoria and its shoreline is covered by a number of international treaties, CAMBA, JAMBA (China and Japan/Australia Migratory Bird Agreements) which protect migratory bird species and the Bonn Convention which protects the wetlands, all signed by the Federal Government. Victorian protection is through the many plant and animal species listed on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act which occur on and adjacent to Lake Victoria, and COGG protection should be provided by

the Environment Significance Overlay which covers the site. Thousands of migratory waders utilize these areas for roosting and feeding during their stay in these and adjacent wetlands during the summer months. It is imperative for the birds to have undisturbed feeding prior to their long migration back to the Arctic region to breed during the northern summer. A reserve of fat, sometimes doubling the bird's weight, is required to provide the energy for this huge journey. A reduction in habitat or feed areas will result in a reduction in overall numbers. The birds have no 'unoccupied' wetlands to move to.

One of the very unsatisfactory issues in this and the previous Stockland development is the fact that although the areas should be protected by the COGG Environment Management Strategy and Wetlands Strategy, both developed by Council with significant community input and support, and passed and wholeheartedly supported by Council, the Planning Department of the COGG continues to promote the fact that as the 'Strategies' are not in a form to be a part of the Planning Scheme, they are not included in the decision making. GEC finds this outrageous. GEC members and many in the community spent many hours assisting the Environment Department develop these two strategies which aimed to protect areas such as Lake Victoria, only to find by a sleight of hand this whole issue is ignored.

Another disappointing effect of the proposed development will be the removal of a huge number of mature trees off the golf course, nearly 200 are proposed to be cut down, more will be planted but there are many years between a small plant and a mature tree

which provides food and habitat for birds and other wildlife. From Fellows Road about halfway down through the course will be nearly treeless. The loss of wildlife habitat is disturbing.

#### Water Quality Monitoring

One of the important issues that the Committee has been following up this year is the need for baseline water quality data for Swan Bay. It is important to establish what this is so that the impact of the Stockland development can be assessed. In the next newsletter we will provide you with a comprehensive update of this key issue for the Association and its members.

#### SBEA Committee

We are still short of one or two committee members and although we can function as a committee at present, the situation may change, particularly next year. We would therefore appeal to members to consider joining the committee. It does not require experience, particular skills or knowledge. The key thing is that you love Swan Bay and want to help look after her interests! The committee meets every two months, usually on the third Sunday of the month between 9.30 and 11am. Please call Roel on 5258 2743 if you would like to know more.

#### **The Nursery**

Location: 79 Nelson Road, Queenscliff

Nursery Working bees are held:

Every Wednesday 9-12

Last Friday of the month 9-12

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. 10-12

Plants are available for sale at \$1 each.

We are always happy to see more volunteers. Just come along, or contact Jill Warneke on 5258 1716 or visit our SBEA website