

Swan Bay Environment Association Inc.



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Gardens 4 Wildlife (*Bob Fuller*)

We are very pleased to tell SBEA members that we have been successful in securing some funding to assist with our project to increase the habitat for wildlife in the home gardens around the Borough. We are one of the recipients in the latest round of the Queenscliff Point Lonsdale Community Enterprise Grants. See photo below at the presentation of the cheque for \$1000. This funding will enable us to go ahead with our project which we are planning to launch at our AGM in March 2016.



Backyard Bird Count (*Guy Werner*)

‘A cassowary could have walked past us now with the amount of attention you’re paying!’ quipped my better half. ‘Someone’s gotta take the notes.’ I retorted. ‘Well, you missed that wattle bird anyway.’ ‘That’s the same one as before...isn’t it?’ I queried feebly. She merely rolled her eyes.

Sitting on the pond-side ‘love seat’, we were taking part in an annual citizens’

science survey of our birdlife. Organised each October by Birdlife Australia (<http://birdlife.org.au/>), the survey provides a national ‘snapshot’ of species that live near people. From this the organisation determines trends in populations and which species are doing well and which not so well. A warning for the prudish, however: being springtime, you are likely to see some naughty behaviour!

Birds may be counted at any time of day or night during the week-long survey. A standard period is 20 minutes and this is an easy length to maintain concentration. We tried to survey around the same time each day but this isn’t necessary.

‘Backyard’ is a misnomer. You may count birds anywhere in Australia that you find comfortable. Personally, a comfy seat and alcoholic refreshment are high on my list of field equipment. However, binoculars or a camera with a good zoom lens are also handy for identifying that cassowary lurking at the bottom of the garden.

Results are entered onto the website (<http://aussiebirdcount.org.au/submit-a-checklist/>). No need to worry if, like me, you don’t know your avocet from your egret: there is a helpful online identification guide.

You can even record bird calls if you’re sure of the species. The ‘Leader of the Opposition’ identified the Spotted Dove

as the culprit that wakes her up between bouts of night-duty at the hospital.

‘Ah, my little dove, there’s a Big-breasted Babbler!’ I cooed wittily, giving her a nudge. “You really put the ‘prat’ in pratincole, didn’t you.” observed my beloved. ‘You’re letting the side down’ I said. ‘You missed those New Holland Honeyeaters.’ ‘Bustard’ I thought I heard her mutter.

I’m afraid it’s too late to get involved this year. Don’t be chicken though, have a go next year. It’s a lark and you’ll have no ‘egrets! A wattle bird alighted in the bottlebrush beside me. I’m sure I’d already counted that one. Surely. Hadn’t I?

Below are images of some of Guy’s ‘count’ in 2015.



Queenscliffe Community Indigenous Plant Nursery *(Jill Warneke)*

The SBEA Indigenous Plant Nursery (at 79 Nelson Rd) has had a very successful year. Over 9000 plants have been purchased (plants are only \$1 each) by groups such as Parks Vic. Bellarine Bayside, Queenscliff Cemetery and individual gardeners. And a few thousand plants have been donated to various organisations such as local schools, Cottage by the Sea, the Neighbourhood House and the Council.

The aim of the Nursery is the preservation of our local vegetation (which of course flows on to providing habitat for local wildlife as well as preserving the distinctive character of our area) so much of our work is cultivating the local plants for re-vegetation. This can involve quite common plants such as growing the important Moonahs to replace those lost to development projects. But we also aim to grow and preserve the rarer and more difficult species so they are not lost forever.

For example we are attempting to cultivate a plant – Silky Wilsonia (*Wilsonia humilis*) – which grows in our area only on the southern edges of Swan Bay. This plant is of Regional

conservation significance so it is important that it is preserved. We have tried collecting its seed and also replanting some rooted material, as yet with limited success but we'll keep experimenting. Some of our rarer plants are only found in the old properties in Point Lonsdale so seed is collected there if possible. Many Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea Australia*) have been grown from seed from the Grass Trees in Glaneuse Rd.

Various revegetation projects are supported and attended over the year, including at the Rail Trail and the Narrows. The Point Lonsdale Golf Club purchased 1000 Moonahs for planting in their redeveloped areas and the Cemetery will be planting over 1500 plants from our Nursery in their planned landscaping design.

Other activities in which the Nursery has taken part have added to the involvement and knowledge of the volunteers. The Artist-in-Residence, Kylie Stillman, spent a day with us; groups of kindergarten and school children visited to learn about propagation; our volunteers had trips to properties to see the plants which they had grown at the Nursery and a seed workshop is planned to learn more about this method of propagation.

A good year, 2015, and this important (and fun) work will continue in 2016, thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of the Nursery volunteers.

The Point (*Greg Parry*)

Moremac has been given approval by Commonwealth Department of the Environment for the development of Stages 4-14. In the original determination by the Commonwealth by

Minister for Environment, Peter Garrett, one of the conditions of approval was that: "baseline data and modelling results must be made publicly available on a monthly basis" (Condition 2g). However, despite this condition the above information has proven to be exceptionally difficult to obtain.

SBEA have been trying for over a year to obtain information on the monitoring and modelling of the discharge from the Moremac Development. The responsible planning authority is the City of Greater Geelong. However, Swan Bay is in the Borough of Queenscliffe which seems to be having much the same trouble as us in accessing information.

The Federal Department of Environment would not release the information until a decision on the development was taken, and now they have approved the next stage of the development, they seem to be shuffling our request for information between officers and the information we are seeking is, despite promises, never provided.

We have spoken directly to Bryce Moore, MD Moremac, and he considers that the additional water quality data they collected when the initial monitoring data proved inadequate (as we expected), is not "baseline" data and so he does not need to provide it. If SBEA needs the information we should obtain it from either the Federal Department of Environment or COGG, both of whom have copies. In recent days we have contacted COGG to access the monitoring and modelling data. We'll keep you posted on whether this source is more helpful and open with what should be publicly available information.