

Swan Bay Environment Association Inc.



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NEWSLETTER NO 73 – July 2016

Side Walk Fair (Rob Hurley)

Sidewalk Fair 2016 was an initiative of the Tourism and Economic Development Unit of the Borough of Queenscliff providing the opportunity to create an activated streetscape over the Saturday and Sunday of the Queen's Birthday weekend in June. It offered local residents and visitors a vibrant, entertaining and enjoyable day out in two of the most charming towns on The Bellarine.



Together with live street music and roving entertainers, traders in Hesse Street Queenscliff, Point Lonsdale Road, Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff Harbour were invited to display their products on the footpath directly outside their stores. The Borough of Queenscliff issued a blanket permit to sell goods and there was no cost to traders to be involved in this promotion.

The Swan Bay Environment Association was invited to participate and had a stall outside the Queenscliff Historical Museum. Our stall promoted:

- * Gardens for Wildlife program
- * Growing indigenous plants
- * Role of SBEA championing the environment of Swan Bay through education and field programs



The SBEA stall was for Saturday only, in conjunction with the nursery opening.

* The response at the Street Stall was good, with sufficient interest to be involved again. Over the 4 hours about 40 – 50 stopped by, some to shelter from the weather. They were a mix of locals, friends of SBEA, visitors and new residents. There was interest in the role of the Nursery, the aims of Gardens for Wildlife and the range of documents on display about Swan Bay, in particular the Swan Bay Environment Trail.

* No people ventured down to the Nursery on the day. Some visited on following days.

* Weather made it very difficult, very cold, strong winds and bursts of heavy rain.

June Nursery Report (*Guy Werner*)

The nursery tea room was broken into during the night of Friday 20 May. Nothing seems to have been stolen but the door latch was forced open and first aid kits raided and their contents strewn around the room, perhaps indicating a search for drugs. Jill Warneke reported the incident to police and arranged for a tradesman to repair the door.

Jill has been instructing volunteers in the art of seed collection to add interest and expand the group's knowledge.

Several volunteers attended the volunteers appreciation evening, held on 19 May at the Point Lonsdale Bowling Club, hosted by the Mayor and the Borough of Queenscliffe.

Volunteers also learnt about shore birds during the World Migratory Bird Day (14 May) event at Lake Victoria hosted by the Geelong Field Naturalists' Club and Birdlife Australia.

Jill and volunteers attended the 13 May opening of the Moonah Memorial Walk at the Queenscliff Cemetery. Jill was also a guest at the VIP lunch. The walk comprises pathways through woodland with opportunities for burial or the scattering of cremation ashes. The Geelong Cemeteries Trust (administrator of the cemetery) previously oversaw the removal of fencing, rubbish and weeds from the area. Our nursery supplied the indigenous plant seedlings for revegetation of the walk. Past Deputy Nursery Coordinator, Jacquie Smith, was instrumental in liaising with Geelong Cemeteries, identifying significant species and supplying the seedlings.

Follow the Birds (*Bob Fuller*)

Swan Bay is one of the global sites that is used by migratory birds. If you are interested in the amazing feats of these

little feathered flying machines, listen to the 4-part series about bird migration on Off Track entitled "Flying for Your Life". Podcasts of the series are still available on line at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/offtrack/past-programs/>

Flamingos and Batteries (*Bob Fuller*)

Those contemplating adding solar storage to their home photovoltaic system or buying an electric car for environmental reasons might reflect on a recent article tucked away in the Business Section of The Age (Monday July 11th).

According to the article, Tesla and General Motors are planning to mass-market electric vehicles next year. Rechargeable batteries will be used in the cars. The batteries contain lithium. One source of this metal is the brine deposits of the Atacama Salt Flat in Chile. The 110 km² area is also home to wild flamingos that feed and breed in the lagoons.

A local biochemist says the lithium miners are pumping the brine up at "an absurd rate". Satellite images indicate that the lagoons and meadows in the salt flat are shrinking and the Chilean Forestry Commission has recorded a drop in flamingo numbers.

The mining companies claim their activities have no impact and decline to name their customers but concede they sell to the largest producers of batteries.

The story is a strong reminder that human impact on nature is continuous and that trying to do the 'right thing' environmentally is not always easy. Perhaps just driving less and using public transport is a simpler solution?