

Action



Learning



Healing

Habitat

Mission

To work with the community to improve and protect the natural environment and ensure good living for future generations.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide access to current technical expertise to maintain and improve the environment.
- To influence decision-making in all sectors of society to maintain and improve the environment.
- To educate our community to avoid waste of water, energy and resources by demonstrating practical examples.
- To provide an accessible community place which strengthens capacity within the wider Port Phillip region to maintain and improve the environment.
- To enable a mutually beneficial community network to maintain and improve the environment.

The Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc., a not-for-profit umbrella environment organisation, is a resource for groups, individuals and the business community in the City of Port Phillip and its wider region. The EcoCentre is located in the St Kilda Botanical Gardens on the corner of Blessington and Herbert Streets.

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Editor: Neil Blake

Photographers: Andrew McCutcheon, Caroline Packham, Ian R Levy,
Naomie Sunner, Neil Blake, Toby Richards, Vicki Black,
Wendy Van Dort

President's Report

Welcome to the EcoCentre's Annual Report for 2007-08.

As public awareness of climate change raises demand for a more sustainable way of life, our activities and programs have expanded. Partnerships are central to our approach, and this was rewarded at the Keep Australia Beautiful 2008 Sustainable Cities Awards. We won the Community Government Partnership Award in recognition of our collaborations with the City of Port Phillip, the local community, and schools.

In the past year, practical project partners include: Alternative Technology Association, Boon Wurrung Foundation, Blue Wedges Inc, CERES, Central Bayside Community Health Services, City of Port Phillip, Coast Action Coast Care, CoPP 'Community Pulse', Conservation Volunteers Australia, Cultivating Communities, Earthcare St Kilda, Friends of Westgate Park, Good Shepherd Youth & Family Services, Inner South Community Health Centre, Iramoo, Natural Resources Conservation League, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church (Middle Park), Park Community Association, Parks Victoria, St Kilda Historical Society, St Kilda Youth Services and Swinburne University Community Development Department.

Through our role in coordinating the Port Phillip Urban Fresh Food Network, our school gardens program has grown to include community and public housing gardens and food security networks. Our productive garden is a great source of organic vegetables and a popular hands-on experience for local schools and community members.

On the home front, the EcoCentre has truly become an eco community hub where people can access expertise in environmental living and technical advice through seminars and meetings, or informally over a cup of tea. Our new self-guided tour of the EcoCentre and various art shows have proved to be very popular with visitors. It has also become popular as a venue for community meetings, seminars, musical events, art exhibitions and health and well being and sustainability workshops.

We are privileged to have strong links with the local indigenous community and Boon Wurrung Elders, particularly through our development and coordination of the St Kilda Indigenous Heritage Trail Walks. We're also developing a Wildlife Discovery program for schools in partnership with Boon Wurrung Elders.

Our 14 school partners include a range of primary and secondary, local and not so local schools. In line with our philosophy of integrating school curriculum with practical outcomes, our education team is introducing the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative in local schools. This delivers practical experiences for students in the theme of environment and sustainability.

We've had recent success in submitting to the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment to develop a 'Roadmap for EcoLiving Demonstration Centres' in partnership with Iramoo. With South Port United Care we will soon be introducing our CarbonCut project designed to help low income families in Port Phillip reduce their energy bills.



Our 'Love the Bay' and 'Beach Buddies' programs have proven very popular and are set to expand. The EcoCentre has recently been endorsed by Waterkeepers Australia to establish a Port Phillip Baykeeper program. This will allow us to engage with communities to protect the whole Port Phillip Bay ecosystem.

The EcoCentre could not continue to operate without committed staff, volunteers and financial support which enables us to work with the community to improve and protect the natural environment and ensure good living for future generations.

We thank our principal sponsor, the City of Port Phillip for its continued support. We also sincerely thank our project sponsors – General Motors Holden, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Reichstein Foundation, the Hamer Foundation, the Melbourne Community Foundation, Albert Park Rotary Club, the Shirley and Digger Martin Environment Fund and the City of Port Phillip.

A big thank you to the management committee, our band of loyal volunteers, and members and affiliates. We hope for your continued support.

Special thanks to our hard working, inspired and passionate staff, Neil, Caroline, Wendy for devising and delivering our programs; Julia for her fundraising and communications activities; David and Jagoda for their administrative support and Brett (Mister Sheen) for clearing.

Noel Gilcrist
President 2007-08

Financials

Treasurer's Report July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008

The committee has determined that Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 1 to 6:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. as at 30 June 2008 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:


Treasurer


Secretary


Chair


Signed this 1st day of August 2008

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF PORT PHILLIP ECOCENTRE INC.

Report on the Financial Report

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. (the association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2008, statement of cash flows and the statement of income and expenses, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Victoria) and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibilities also include establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies, and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

The financial report had been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the committee's financial reporting under the Associations Incorporation Act (Victoria). I disclaim any assumption for responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Qualification

As is common for organisations of this type, it is not practicable for Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. to maintain an effective system of internal control over receipts until their initial entry in the accounting records. Accordingly, my audit in relation to receipts was limited to the amounts recorded.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, subject to the effects of such adjustments, if any, as might have been determined to be necessary had the limitation discussed in the qualification paragraph not existed, the financial report of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. presents fairly, in all material respects the financial position of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. as at 30 June 2008 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.

BUCKLEY & CO.
Chartered Accountants




Signed this 1st day of August 2008

Financials

Port Phillip EcoCentre inc. Statement of income and expenses for the year ended 30th June 2008

Income	2008	2007
Book & DVD Sales	6,289	3,265
Membership	1,551	1,129
Donations	7,915	6,222
Administer Projects	26,666	15,319
Sundry Income	1,785	609
Interest	5,604	3,869
WFD Contribution	945	-
Venue Hire	2,076	3,795
Seminar & Education	11,260	8,338
Eco Centre Tours	264	1,316
Eco Fair	-	425
City of Port Phillip Administration Grant	115,000	154,127
DSE Fund	33,333	46,667
NED program(Central Bayside Community Health Service)	4,960	972
Administrative Contributions	-	1,670
SCP/PULSE	5,909	-
Community Gardening	2,993	-
Landcare Australia	25,000	-
Love The Bay	37,478	-
Indigenous Heritage	600	-
Beach Buddies	1,831	-
Total Income	\$291,459	\$247,623

Port Phillip EcoCentre inc. statement of expenses for the year ended 30th June 2008

Expenses	2008	2007
Bank Charges	203	130
Catering	1,848	3,115
Computer Costs	1,291	1,754
Consultants Fees	-	830
Books and DVD costs	97	3,928
Donations	-	1,163
Gardening	2,711	2,196
Audit Fees	2,400	2,250
Office Supplies	1,098	872
Insurance	4,661	2,611
Postage	341	154
Printing & Stationery	8,611	5,378
Professional Services	2,157	6,405
Repairs & Maintenance	983	496
Replacements	400	1,849
Safety Equipment	-	273
Seminars & Training	1,760	1,345
Staff Amenities	28	18
Staff Training	259	359
Subscriptions	740	628
Sundry Expenses	542	160
Superannuation	20,213	17,841
Travelling Costs	871	287
Telephone	4,646	3,761
Wages	229,969	204,457
Materials	3,861	6,155
Cleaning	17	694
Electricity	810	850
Clear Comfort	3,150	-
WorkCover	4,808	2,334
Total Expenses	298,495	273,069
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(7,036)	(25,446)

Financials

PORT PHILLIP ECOCENTRE INC. BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2008

	2008	2007
Members' Funds		
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward	341,372	366,818
Operating (Deficit) For Year	(7,036)	(25,445)
Total Members' Funds	\$334,336	\$341,372
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank – Administration Account	3,576	20,899
Cash at Bank – General Account	75,131	36,814
Cash at Bank – Public Fund (1)	3,000	7,531
Cash at Bank – Term Deposit	12,500	-
Cash at Bank – Public Fund (2)	2,202	2,095
Cash at Bank – Staff Entitlements	13,566	14,277
Cash at Bank – Sandhurst Public Investment	16,307	19,576
Cash at Bank – Sandhurst Admin Investment	11,631	427
Cash at Bank – Sandhurst Account General	3,332	45,853
Trade Debtors	10,679	7,821
Petty Cash	105	78
Total Current Assets	\$162,229	\$165,371
Non Current Assets		
Eco House, at cost	260,519	260,519
Plant & Equipment, at cost	22,598	22,598
Total Non Current Assets	283,117	283,117
Total Assets	\$435,346	\$438,488
Current Liabilities		
Income In Advance	72,955	72,015
Trade Creditors	1,181	-
PAYG Payable	6,039	11,697
GST Payable	7,404	3,377
Superannuation Payable	2,588	300
Employee Entitlements	10,753	9,727
Total Current Liabilities	\$101,010	\$97,116
Net Assets	\$334,336	\$341,372

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report.

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Vic.). The committee has determined that Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Vic.) and the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AASB 112 Income Taxes

AASB 1001 Materiality

AASB 110 Events after the Balance Sheet Date

AASB 117 Leases

No other applicable Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values, or except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following material accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

(a) Fixed Assets

Fixed assets are not being depreciated.

(b) Income Tax

Pursuant to the provisions of the Income Tax Assessment Act the Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. is exempt from income tax.

New Horizons - Environment and the Arts

We've been privileged to host several fabulous exhibitions which stimulate thinking and conversation about biodiversity and the human footprint. We hope to continue this theme into the future.



Ron Eden

We combined the launch of Ron Eden's Climate Change Folio launch with our Creative Community Responses to Climate Change forum. Ron wanted to make a statement about the ecological predicament the human race was facing and decided to conduct an experiment. Storing a number of film transparencies in a "heavily trafficked" communal laundry exposed them to the effects of laundry detergents, bleaches and their airborne chemicals and the humidity generated by clothes dryers - catalysts of global warming and climate change.

The twelve prints of spectacularly colourful, abstract images depicting the effects of climate change was exhibited at the EcoCentre for a month and then displayed at 4 other venues around Port Phillip Bay.

Angela Wylie's spectacular Antarctica photos (taken January 2008) dramatically captured the grandeur of that extraordinary continent and its wildlife.



Angela Wylie and friends at her 'Antarctica' exhibition launch



Jacky Lizard, one of Ian R Levy's Wildlife Portraits.

Ian R Levy is a Melbourne-based naturalist with an extraordinary ability to move through urban bushland without disturbing wildlife. Consequently, he has combined his twin passions for art and wildlife to produce the Wildlife Portraits photographs which were exhibited in conjunction with the Melbourne Social Forum's fourth annual festival and urban planning conference.



Carmel Wallace's installation at the EcoCentre

At the time of writing, our string of exhibitions culminated with the launch of Carmel Wallace's artwork (locally nick-named "plastidiversity"). Carmel was our artist in residence for three weeks in July 2008. During that time she created an artwork constructed of detritus collected from Port Phillip Bay beaches and the shores of the Lower Yarra. This work is a city-cousin, companion piece for *An Octopus's Garden* which was made from materials collected from Discovery Bay near Portland. Members of the public were fascinated with Carmel's work and her meticulous process of cataloguing each item of litter.

Taking litter from the beaches and placing it under lights provides the viewer with a whole new perspective on where each item came from, what was its purpose, and how did it get into the environment?? Carmel is represented by 101 Collins Street.

Major Projects - Education for Sustainability

Schools Education Program

Through our school education program practical projects, education, environmental planning and action, reflection and celebration are integrated into solutions for reducing our ecological footprint and enhancing biodiversity. Our school partnerships involving whole school communities provide a setting where we are all learners and teachers - working together towards a sustainable community.

This year has forged new partnerships and programs. Along with our practical environmental partnership with school communities - our school program has expanded to include:

- Teacher training and whole school strategic planning through the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI Vic) in partnership with CERES;
- Youth leadership through the Tomorrow Leaders for Sustainability program in partnership with Sustainability International and Pat Armstrong;
- 'Wildlife Discovery' with Boon Wurrung Elders, local friends groups and councils; and
- A Teacher environment network

Partner schools continuing from 2005 and 2006 include:

St Kilda Primary School
St Kilda Park Primary School
Stonnington Primary School
Elwood College
Middle Park Primary School

New partner schools in 2007 include:

St Michael's Grammar School (Junior)
Victorian College for the Deaf
Bentleigh East Primary School
Melbourne Community School
St Columba's Primary School
Port Melbourne Primary School
Elwood Primary
St Mary's Primary
Canterbury Girls College

Projects so far include:

Construction and ongoing support for productive gardens and compost systems at 5 local schools.

8 successful Australian Government Community Water Grant Projects for schools, receiving funding of \$243,385, saving an estimated 7,282,000 L water per annum, with a total rainwater storage capacity of 280,000L.

Indigenous wetland habitats at two schools and an ongoing park wetland monitoring program.

Indigenous and sensory gardens at 7 schools.

AuSSI Vic commenced at 5 schools.



Caroline Packham Sustainability Education & Projects

Case Study - Vic College for the Deaf

Following the construction of raised gardens at the Victorian College for the Deaf earlier in the year, a timber shed was constructed using salvaged materials (the roofing, door and window), radially-sawn weather boards and plantation timbers. The shed was designed and built by students, teachers, Eco-Centre staff and volunteers, and local carpenter Ben Wood. A wonderful experience, substantial carbon emission savings compared to a steel pre-fabricated shed, and a cosy place for quality time in the garden were created. The crew then went on to build the water tank base from recycled timber with help from a Conservation Volunteers Australia Green Corps team.

This garden project has kick-started sustainability in the school, brought a smile to many faces, and drawn in the maintenance staff, gardeners, social workers, students, staff, parents and volunteers. A couple of the students were keen to move into the new timber shed thinking it cosy enough to sleep in. This personal attachment and happiness demonstrates the benefits of designing and building together with natural & sustainable material selection - it feels really good!

Major Projects: Education for Sustainability



Victorian College for the Deaf Garden – and very happy teacher

Youth Leadership

A new addition to our continually evolving repertoire of workshops, has been youth environmental leadership workshops. This workshop theme was initiated through our invitation to a 'Girls Inspire Greatness' conference for female high school students from across Melbourne.



Canterbury Girls' Environment Crew at work

We have since been invited by the founders of a new initiative, 'Tomorrows Leaders for Sustainability', to become the first local environment hub to deliver this program. We will commence delivery of TLIS in late 2008.

We thank the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Holden, Landcare Australia, the City of Port Phillip, and the Shirley and Digger Martin Environment Fund for their support.

Community Workshops

Community workshops this year have included: Productive and Waterwise Gardening; Greywater and Rainwater; Greenhouse and Energy Efficiency. The main focus of the workshops has been on practical action. However, participants have identified that they would like to learn how to influence their friends and neighbors, and lead the establishment of sustainable living hubs and precincts. The Port Phillip Urban Fresh Foods Network has generated project group workshops to plan and build gardens in a range of community settings.



Rooming House Garden Group workshop, 2008

We plan to support this enthusiasm for leadership through further workshops, facilitated action groups and other activities. Connections with other successful hubs and those involved in facilitating similar programs will be invaluable. We sense that the 'early innovators' and 'early adopters' are now ready to 'mainstream' sustainable living and are gearing up to lead local neighborhood transformation.

In October 2007 we launched the **Sandbelt Teacher Environment Network**. Through this network we aim to provide ongoing professional learning and networking opportunities for school communities. It is an opportunity for participants and guest facilitators to share stories and approaches practiced in other organizations and regions.

Workshops this year have featured Cultivating Community school gardens and Department of Primary Industries Landlearn. Later in 2008 we will host Resource Smart Schools Waste workshops supported by Sustainability Victoria.

Community Strengthening and New Horizons Projects

Roadmap for Eco-living Demonstration Centres

Along with CERES, the EcoCentre was identified in the State Government's Our Environment Our Future Sustainability Action Statement as a leading model Eco-living Centre. We've successfully applied to the Sustainability Fund to deliver our 'Roadmap' project will guide other local Eco-living Centres on their journey. The project will be led by the EcoCentre, with a fantastic team of partners including Iramoo, CERES, Guide Beside and Pat Armstrong.

This enables us to reflect with other centres on what makes an Eco-living Centre successful, effective and sustainable; and to develop tools to help others. It's great to see other centres emerging across Victoria, and wonderful to have the opportunity to move into the future, working collaboratively with other centres and communities. This will enable us all to respond effectively to climate change, in meaningful localised settings connected to and working with the community, business, governments and schools.

Love the Bay

We were fortunate to receive \$30K from Reichstein Foundation and \$10K from Melbourne Community Foundation's Ballandry Trust for this program which involved three major areas of endeavour.

Collaborations with Earthcare St Kilda: The EcoCentre brought together Earthcare, Coast Care Coast Action, St Columba's Primary School, and Good Shepherd Youth Services, to develop the 'Beach Buddies' coast activities tour for families. The tour includes a show bag containing the Alfreda the City Penguin book, Underwater Port Phillip Bay DVD, a marine life activities book, and a board game called Penguin Panic.



'Beach Buddies' guide, Clare McCuscheon with local family



Boon Wurrung Elder, Carolyn Briggs leading the Indigenous Cultural Heritage Walk in February 2008.

Working with Boon Wurrung Elders

Following the successful delivery of two Indigenous Heritage Walks in February and March 2007, further walks were conducted in 2008 in conjunction with the City of Port Phillip's 'Yalukit Wilam Ngargee' Festival. The ultimate aim of fostering a commercial indigenous tour enterprise is set to become a reality in late 2008.

Supporting Blue Wedges public advocacy for Port Phillip Bay: The EcoCentre's communications support staff has provided ongoing maintenance and updating of the Blue Wedges website to ensure the wider community participates fully in the statutory planning processes associated with the Port Phillip Bay channel deepening proposal.

Port Phillip Baykeeper program

The EcoCentre is endorsed by Waterkeepers Australia to deliver a Port Phillip Baykeeper program. The program aims to engage the wider community to research, monitor, celebrate and protect the unique natural, social, and economic values of Port Phillip Bay. We understand that the health of the Bay depends on the integrity of its use and the quality of streams flowing to it; and takes practical action to eliminate potential threats.

PP Baykeeper celebrates existing community action in catchments to improve and protect waterways. We understand that long-term solutions are based on our ability to form and maintain positive partnerships with diverse interest groups such as: Association of Bayside Municipalities, Catchment Management Authorities, community, recreational users, government and business.

We deliver curriculum-based activities that highlight indigenous culture and the features which make each foreshore unique.

Community Strengthening and New Horizons Projects

Central Bayside Community Health

We've engaged two disability groups from Central Bayside Community Health Services in our environmental programs since 2005.



The NED survey team: no bird too large or small!

This year, the **New Environment Direction Team (NED)** began monthly bird surveys and bird photography at Elsterwick Park Lake, and we've liaised with Bayside Council to discuss how the surveys can inform future park management strategies. In addition to monitoring wetland habitat values, the opportunity to monitor the influence of diversified tree planting to accommodate small bush birds (which are currently eliminated from the area by Noisy Miners) is of interest.

NED will be planting to improve bird habitat in Elsterwick Park. Apart from the positive environmental outcomes, one of our aims with the program is to get the group to meet other members of the community to help develop social networks. Interested local bird observers are welcome to join us.

Better Environmental Action Team

BEAT visit the EcoCentre weekly to participate in gardening and craft activities. The program is designed for people with high-level disabilities to have a multi-sensory experience of the garden and activities that span the life-cycle of plants. We're very proud to have our BEAT friends on the team.



Examples of the BEAT Team's handicraft.

Port Phillip Urban Fresh Food Network

PPUFFN was conceived in 2007 with the aim of promoting local food production to improve food security. The network began as an initiative between City of Port Phillip and the EcoCentre to collaborate with other local groups and deliver four forums a year. The forums have been attended by local residents and community health workers. Several practical projects and many more ideas have arisen.

Some of the practical projects include the planning of three community gardens; one at Port Melbourne Uniting Church and the other two at rooming houses. These gardens are planned to be built in the next six months and will provide food to people who may otherwise have little or no access to fresh produce. The gardens will also provide social and health benefits by having regular outdoor group activities that promote creativity, skills development and meaningful connection with others.



Wendy Van Doff - Community Gardener & PUFFN convener

Another project that resulted from alliances made through PUFFN was the St Kilda Youth Service (SKYS) Garden Program. The program was developed with SKYS, EcoCentre and Albert Park Rotary, who provided funding, helpful advice and support. A chicken coop has been designed; and built under the guidance of Ben, a skilled carpenter who is also a good teacher. The youth team gained valuable skills in building, problem solving and working with others. The garden is starting to produce tasty veggies and it won't be long until the youth will be enjoying fresh eggs as well.

PPUFFN has been an exciting development as it has created new partnerships and possibilities for projects to interrelate through the sharing of resources, skills and knowledge.

Affiliate Group Reports

The Park Community Association

Our Corroboree Tree Grasslands project establishes native grasses in the vicinity of the Corroboree Tree in Albert Park Reserve to celebrate two federations – the Kulin Nation, a pre-settlement federation of aboriginal tribes located around Port Phillip Bay and Central Victoria and the 2001 Centenary of Federation. It also highlights the threatened status of indigenous grasses as a plant group in Victoria.



The Ngergee (aka Corroboree) Tree at St Kilda Junction

We propagate and plant native grasses from local seed, each species in the landscape representing a tribe of the Kulin Nation. Initiated in 1998, the project, is now almost complete. We have planted over 65,000 plants, augmenting the earlier work done by Earthcare and re-invigorating the southern, 'forgotten' end of Albert Park Reserve.

During the past year, we propagated and planted out approximately 5,200 grasses and trees, carried out mainly through a Green Corps project initiated by the EcoCentre. It not only contributed significantly to our project but also provided valuable exposure to, and field experience, for young people interested in the environment. Volunteers/helpers are always welcome - to collect seed, propagate plants, planting and weeding; no skills required.

Contact - John Addie 9682 2323.

Earthcare St Kilda Inc.

Our main activities are research and monitoring of the Little Penguin colony on St Kilda Breakwater, population study of rakali (native water rat), and planting natural heritage areas to increase indigenous vegetation. Our winter activities include study and removal of Northern Pacific Seastars which have been composted at the EcoCentre.

Penguin research has now been in operation for over twenty years. A complete report for the penguin year from May 2007 – April 2008 is available at www.stkildapenguins.com.au

Earthcare continues its successful working relationship with the City of Port Phillip and Citywide Service Solutions in planting and weeding at three Natural Heritage Areas in the City of Port Phillip.



Rakali eating red swimmer crab on St Kilda breakwater

The rakali study maps their distribution and population in St Kilda Harbour, Albert Park Lake, Elwood Canal and Sandridge Beach. Over the past 12 months we've developed a dedicated rakali web site <http://www.rakali.com/>, and a Rakali Educational Resource Kit. Around 50 kits were sent to primary schools in areas around Port Phillip Bay.

Earthcare has advocated for protection of the St Kilda Penguins in submissions to the Channel Deepening Project planning process, including in response to a draft Environmental Management Plan (EMP). The final draft of the EMP only recommends monitoring of the weights of penguins as they arrive ashore on Phillip Island. We continue to advocate for increased protection of the St Kilda penguins.

The 'Beach Buddies' eco-tour organised by the EcoCentre are an exciting new partnership Earthcare. We are grateful to the EcoCentre for use of its valuable facilities and support from its very friendly and willing staff. More details about Earthcare can be found on our website

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~earthcar/about.htm>

Affiliate Group Reports

Friends of Westgate Park celebrate their 10th anniversary. What progress has been made since 1998. The Friends have developed a revegetation plan for the park representing eight indigenous plant communities of inner Melbourne.



We've revegetated approximately 8 hectares of weed infested degraded land by spreading over 650 truck loads of mulch and planting over 200,000 plants (approximately 300 different species). All the revegetated sites have been maintained through weeding, weed spraying, pruning and plant replacement. Much of the plant stock over the last couple of years has been propagated in our on-site nursery. The Friends devised and implemented a plan for the half hectare of land added to the park along the northern boundary in 2004. This involved extensive earthworks to create a series of ephemeral lagoons. The \$70,000 funds required for the project were sourced from the corporate sector.

In 2007-08, community input generated by the Friends averaged 1,115 volunteer hours per month. Our volunteers come from a large cross section of the community: surrounding suburbs, corporate sector, work for the dole schemes, schools and people with disabilities. We also engaged with two Commonwealth Government Green Corps projects aimed at training young Australians in conservation and land management to improve the park.

We monitor the natural resources of the park including bird surveys and water watch program and are currently working with Parks Victoria to build a bird hide in the park funded by non-government funds.

All this is possible through our excellent partnerships with organisations such as Landcare Australia, Port Phillip EcoCentre, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Greening Australia and Central Bayside Community Health. Why not come and join us!

Contact: Tony 0400 770 254

Blue Wedges Inc Inc was formed specifically to act as a community advocate for the protection of Port Phillip Bay against impacts of the Channel deepening project. Our supporters include recreational anglers, ecotour operators, community environment groups and exporters; diverse groups who might not ordinarily be united. Blue Wedges has amassed thousands of volunteer hours in research and submission-writing to the various planning processes. We've also maintained a strong voice to the wide community through the media, rallies and forums, and presentations to schools and interest groups. However, the dredging is proceeds.

In the face of the dredge turning up in the bay before all the necessary approvals had been obtained, we took legal action to prevent the project. Our action was unsuccessful and court costs have been awarded against us. But we will continue to act in the public interest to protect our Bays. In a civil society, what we and other community groups before us have done contributes to how our law is shaped.

Our legal action proved that the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act doesn't necessarily protect the Environment nor conserve Biodiversity. In its current form, the Act can be used to legally sanction destructive projects. We and many other groups and individuals will not simply remain as passive bystanders when our Bays are threatened.



Chloë McCordell - after her epic swim for the Bay

In October 2007, marathon swimmer Chloë McCordell took to the water at Brighton Seabaths to raise awareness of the Channel Deepening project. Stopping only for food and drinks, but never leaving the water, she swam a massive 38km in 11 hours. Thanks Chloë for your commitment and stamina, and to everyone who provided support on the day. To all who have contributed to our campaign, we thank you for your continued support.

Contact: www.bluewedges.org

Affiliate Group Reports



Kokwam, Andrew, Laurel & the cup murri rainbow

Melbourne Social Forum

MSF aims to "create an open public space to discuss, share and act on ideas for sustainable social and ecological justice". Our 2008 mini Melbourne Social Forum was held at the EcoCentre in April, 2008. Ninety people came to hear speakers on food, urban planning and public transport issues.

The band, The Conch stole the show and had everyone grooving and tapping along with their unique sound and political lyrics. The authentic Mexican vegetarian feast was enjoyed by all. The engage media film festival screened interesting documentaries and ran until people were ready for home. The event was filmed by Plug-in TV and we hope to have content on the internet soon for you to download and watch. MSF would like to thank our speakers, the City of Port Phillip and the Port Phillip EcoCentre for their support in holding the event.

www.melbournesocialforum.org

St. Kilda Organic Food Cooperative Ltd (skof) @ ecohouse Saturday's 10.30-12.

Each week skof bulk purchases organic seasonal fruit and vegetables and boxes up to distribute an equal share to be collected by its members. The distribution is a regular feature at the EcoCentre demonstrating the potential of the Centre to be a community hub where people socialise and learn about positive sustainability initiatives that they can become involved in, with skof attracting many wonderful new members over the last few months.

Contact: Steve3182@yahoo.com

Our Rainbow Place

The EcoCentre has been a hub for Our Rainbow place in the past 12 months. A particular highlight was the 'cup murri' (above ground earth oven) feast in December 2007. Over 80 friends and family from the Indigenous community gathered to enjoy the good food and company. At 4am, Kokwam, Andrew, Laurel (pictured left) and Neil set the fire.

By 5.30am we knew the day would be too deadly when a rainbow graced the early morning sky. We opened the oven just after midday and the food was simply sensational.

Contact: Kokwam Wapau kwapau@ischs.org.au
Naomi Prior nprior@ischs.org.au

St Kilda Indigenous Nursery Cooperative (SKINC)

SKINC's year has been one of comings and goings of members. We welcomed Charles Saffroy who grows non-local Australian natives (all dry-tolerant of course). Charles keeps our retail section stocked with many new lovely plants and spreads the SKINC word at markets and festivals. Vanessa Devereux has returned to England to live after many years at SKINC. Currently she's catching up with friends and family and cruising around Europe but will continue working in indigenous horticulture in the UK. Rosey Haas is also leaving SKINC employ (but not co-op membership) to work in bushland restoration.

With so many changes, SKINC's future is up in the air at the moment. We certainly hope to keep producing and selling local plants as we have for the last 15 years. If you have a yen to be involved in the fun process of plant propagation or have a vision for future programs at SKINC, let us know! Contact: skinc@bigpond.com or on 9645 2477



SKOF boxes of fresh organic fruit and veggies

Affiliate Group reports

St Kilda Community Gardens Club

is located in Railway Place, close to the Balacleva train station. We have 24 veggie plots, but there are 27 people on the waiting list, indicating the need for another community garden in this eastern part of the City of Port Phillip. It currently takes almost four years to be allocated a plot. The last two years we have received Community Grants from Port Phillip Council to re-border the veggie plots. It was a very big job and took many working bees to complete. Plot-holders are happy to see the end of pieces of old timber from broken-down borders littering the Garden. And we now have more time to tend our vegetables when there is less need to pull out couch grass invading the plots from adjoining paths.

Animal Liberation Victoria

This is an abolitionist organisation whose mission statement is to abolish the property status of animals. We believe animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on or use for entertainment. Educating the public about the institutionalised abuse of animals in factory farms is one of our main duties, and to this end ALV's undercover rescue team regularly documents the dismal life and death millions of animals face each and every day. ALV encourages and helps people to live a cruelty-free vegan lifestyle as the best way to help animals, the environment and human health. If you would like to get more involved with Animal Liberation Victoria please visit www.alv.org.au or call the office on (03) 8598 9460 for free information pack.

The EcoCentre Family

Management Committee

Noel Gilcrist	President
Toby Richards	Vice President
Tony Flude	Secretary
John Gilcrist	Treasurer
Steve Pennells	
Elaine Wilkinson	
Rosey Haas	
Andrea Eales	

EcoCentre Public Fund Managers

Kay McKenzie, Louise Kyle, John Gilcrist

Staff

Brett Gillespie (Hygiene)
Caroline Packham (Education and Projects)
David Giles (IT and Communications)
Yagoda Kurek (Accounts)
Julia Muniandy (Fundraising & newsletter)
Neil Blake (Coordinator)
Wendy Van Dort (Community Foods & Gardens)

Affiliate Groups 2007 - 2008

Animal Liberation Victoria	Our Rainbow Place
Blue Wedges Inc	Park Community Association
Earthcare St Kilda	Permablitz
Friends of Port Melbourne's Foreshore	St Kilda Community Gardens Club
Friends of Westgate Park	St Kilda Indigenous Nursery Cooperative
GaiaVic Inc	St Kilda Music and Poetry
Homeground Services	St Kilda Organic Food Cooperative
Jewish Ecological Coalition Inc	Veg Out Community Artists Garden
Melbourne Social Forum	



Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc.

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