

## Action



## Learning

## Habitat



## Healing

## Mission

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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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## President's Report

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*Happy 10<sup>th</sup> birthday  
Port Phillip  
EcoCentre.*

*Here's to many  
more years of  
LOCAL ACTION—  
GLOBAL FUTURE!*

Everyone would agree that the EcoCentre celebrates its tenth year at a very important time for the environment. We thank all community members who share the passion for protecting the natural environment, including those who value the information and education provided by the EcoCentre and especially those who volunteer and get involved in the various projects. We also celebrate and give our special thanks to all the people who take out and continue their annual membership.

*The future promises to be beneficial for the broad community as our existing programs expand and new and diverse programs emerge. Local neighbourhoods and regional communities can learn from the framework of healthy living demonstrated by the EcoCentre.*

For example:

- St Kilda Organic Food Co Op (SKOF)
- Port Phillip Urban Fresh Food Network (PPUFFN)
- Carbon Cut
- EcoHouse guided tours for individuals, groups and schools
- Wellbeing Program
- Beach Buddies Family Eco Tours
- Eco Schools Partnership Program
- Music and Poetry
- Roadmap for Eco-living Centres

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to deliver quality programs made possible due to the support of our partners, especially the City of Port Phillip and generous sponsors, Holden, Bendigo Bank, Albert Park Rotary Club, ERM Foundation, Harner Family Trust, Parks Victoria and St Kilda Football Club

A dedicated and enthusiastic team made up of staff, volunteers, members, affiliated groups, local residents and businesses all contribute to providing the hope and optimism that's evident throughout the EcoCentre activities.



*Some of the happy Eco team: Caroline, Jill, George, Kerry, Noel and Elaine. Here's to the future!*

Much gratitude also extends to a dedicated Committee of Management for their skills, resources and dependability. Special thanks go to John Gilcrist (Senior Citizen of the Year, 2008, EcoCentre Committee member and Treasurer 2007 – 2009). Thanks John for your wisdom, patience and sense of humour. We wish you all the very best for your retirement.

*In the coming year we will consolidate and extend existing programs such as Eco Schools Partnerships, CarbonCut, Community Foods, Wellbeing program and Port Phillip Baykeeper. We will also focus on increasing volunteer opportunities and the EcoCentre's profile to attract and provide benefits to our members, sponsors, the wider community; and last but not least..... our environment!!*

# Financials

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## Treasurer's Report July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009

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 2009 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.

John Gikrist

### 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 2009, 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 a true and fair view, in all material respects the financial position of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. as at 30 June 2009 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.

**BICKLEY & CO**  
Chartered Accountants



## Financials

### Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. Statement of income and expenses for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009

<u>Income</u>	2009	2008
Book & DVD Sales	4,875	6,289
Membership	890	1,551
Donations	3,729	7,915
Court Penalty Payment	40,000	-
Administer Projects	39,225	26,686
Sundry Income	1,024	1,785
Interest	7,005	5,604
WFD Contribution	473	945
Venue Hire	3,135	2,075
Seminar & Education	150,149	11,260
Eco Centre Tours	987	264
External services	6,150	-
City of Port Phillip Administration Grant	126,274	115,000
DSE Fund	-	30,333
NED program (Central Bayside Community Health Service)	2,091	4,960
Clear Comfort	5,954	-
SCP/PULSE	5,500	5,909
Community Gardening	6,154	2,993
Landcare Australia	-	25,000
Love The Bay	-	37,478
Indigenous Heritage	-	600
Beach Buddies	1,406	1,831
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>405,921</b>	<b>291,459</b>

### Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. statement of expenses for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009

<u>Expenses</u>	2009	2008
Expenses	\$	\$
Bank Charges	219	203
Catering	1,802	1,548
Computer Costs	1,030	1,261
Books and DVD costs	1,414	97
Gardening	728	2,711
Audit Fees	2,400	2,400
Office Supplies	1,110	1,088
Insurance	1,624	4,661
Postage	334	341
Printing & Stationery	6,654	8,611
Professional Services	50,139	2,157
Repairs & Maintenance	534	963
Replacements	38	400
Safety Equipment	45	-
Seminars & Training	7,575	1,760
Staff Amenities	156	28
Staff Training	2,664	259
Subscriptions	606	740
Sundry Expenses	2,269	542
Superannuation	19,917	20,213
Travelling Costs	896	671
Telephone	6,042	4,646
Wages	226,127	229,989
Employee Entitlements	6,840	-
Materials	9,170	3,861
Cleaning	610	17
Electricity	1,256	610
Clear Comfort	900	3,150
WorkCover	3,309	4,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>399,860</b>	<b>296,456</b>
<b>Operating Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>46,161</b>	<b>(7,007)</b>

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report.

# Financials

## PORT PHILLIP ECOCENTRE INC. BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2009

	2009	2008
<b>Members' Funds</b>		
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward	334,336	341,372
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) For Year	48,101	(7,036)
<b>Total Members' Funds</b>	<b>382,437</b>	<b>334,336</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at Bank - Administration Account	16,639	3,576
Cash at Bank - General Account	83,143	75,131
Cash at Bank - Public Fund (1)	1,498	3,000
Cash at Bank - Term Deposit	-	12,500
Cash at Bank - Public Fund (2)	2,265	2,202
Cash at Bank - Staff Entitlements	14,496	13,598
Cash at Bank - Sandhurst Public Investment	31,196	16,307
Cash at Bank - Sandhurst Admin Investment	-	11,631
Cash at Bank - Sandhurst Account General	-	3,332
Cash at Bank - Bendigo Term Deposit	67,666	-
Trade Debtors	9,023	10,879
Petty Cash	497	105
Prepaid Expenses	2,250	-
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>228,703</b>	<b>152,229</b>
<b>Non Current Assets</b>		
Eco House, at cost	260,519	260,519
Plant & Equipment, at cost	22,588	22,588
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>	<b>283,117</b>	<b>283,117</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>511,820</b>	<b>435,346</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Income In Advance	69,827	72,565
Trade Creditors and Accrued Expenses	30,219	1,181
PAYG Payable	3,950	6,039
GST Payable	6,004	7,494
Superannuation Payable	3,433	2,588
Employee Entitlements	15,890	10,752
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>129,323</b>	<b>101,019</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>382,497</b>	<b>334,326</b>

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 1031 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

### Wellbeing program

The range of interests presented at the EcoCentre has substantially diversified with the regular inclusion of activities promoting positive relationships between each other and our environment. We've been proud to provide a base for the Blue Hat Project and have greatly benefited from Blue Hat founder Waltraud Reiner's energy and commitment to community.

Regular activities include the 'Good Yam' knitting group, and regular screenings of Eckhardt Toile interviews. Blue Hat project also coordinates the 'Blankets of Happiness' exhibition which is traveling around Australia to promote mental health. [www.bluehatproject.org.au](http://www.bluehatproject.org.au)



*Happy blanket!*

### 'Beach Buddies' family ecotours

The 'Beach Buddies' tours developed as a fun, educational activity for families with young children have been successfully delivered since January 2008. The success of the tours resulted in Parks Victoria and St Kilda Football Club sponsorship of the tours in 2008.



*Beach Buddies guide Clare McCutcheon*

**Port Phillip Baykeeper program** was established in 2008 in association with Waterkeepers Australia. This program is a major strategic direction to foster community and government collaboration for appreciation and stewardship of Port Phillip Bay. Over the past 12 months the program has delivered guided walks, classroom presentations, and shoreline shell and litter surveys. So far, shell surveys have been conducted on 32 beaches around the Bay. [www.bay-keeper.com](http://www.bay-keeper.com)



## Special People

**Waltraud Reiner** is no ordinary Murrumbidgee milliner! Waltraud has been a dynamic initiator of EcoCentre activities over the past year. Her focus on creating links between people, their community, their environment and mental health has established a whole new 'wellbeing' program at the EcoCentre.



*Waltraud bakes the best Haile!*



*Kura checks the lillies*

**Kura Crichton** has an extraordinary ability to spot a praying mantis at 40 paces, and has an in depth understanding of their behaviour and physical needs. Kura has been instrumental in establishing and maintaining the mini-beasts enclosure mounted outside our kitchen window. Kura raised praying mantids last spring and has introduced Marbled Geckos this year.

**Paul Blackburn** has contributed hundreds of hours and his exceptional skills to create a DVD documentary on the EcoCentre. The doco continues to attract many 'hits' on the internet and is a major tool to take what we do to the wider world.

**George Phaedonos** joined us as the Greek translator with the CarbonCut team and soon branched out to play a key role in EcoCentre volunteer coordination. His friendly and caring disposition has encouraged many new volunteers and ensures that their efforts are acknowledged and rewarded.



*Paul interviews George*

## Major Projects - Eco School Partnerships

*Our Eco School Partnerships program establishes ongoing partnerships with schools to engage with the whole school community in reducing the ecological footprint of each school and disseminate knowledge and action into the wider community. Over the past four years the EcoCentre has worked with 14 local schools on collaborative planning and practical projects.*



Harvest time at Victorian College for the Deaf

The program involves: hands-on environmental projects to enable experiential learning and youth leadership; strategic planning through the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative Victoria (AuSSI Vic) framework; the Tomorrow's Leaders for Sustainability program; and teacher professional learning through the Port Phillip and Bayside Teacher Environment Network. Achievements are celebrated and success stories shared through the annual Eco School Awards and Harvest Festival.

*Eco School Partnerships enhance outcomes for schools through: volunteer participation, access to the EcoCentre for tours and activities, links with community groups and projects, networking between local schools, and relationship building between the EcoCentre and school communities.*

*The program is unique in Victoria and is attracting attention from other regions and leaders in Education for Sustainability.*

Highlights for the program throughout 2008 and early 2009 have included:

- Development of an Education for Sustainability strategic plan and new program delivery partnerships;
- Starting the Port Phillip and Bayside Teachers Environment Network;
- Delivery of AuSSI Vic core module to 5 schools in partnership with CERES and development of the EcoCentre AuSSI Vic hub;
- Expansion of the Wildlife Discovery program;
- Delivery of the Tomorrow's Leaders for Sustainability program.

Practical action and projects delivered through participatory design and construction, included:

- Ongoing support for productive gardens and compost systems at 3 local schools;
- Development of a new school productive garden at Christian Brothers College;
- Australian Government Community Water Grant Projects for Elwood College, receiving total funding of approximately \$100,000 saving an estimated 3,319,000 L water per annum, with a total rainwater storage capacity of 69,000L, and an estimated 88% reduction on mains water usage;
- Development of an indigenous habitat garden;
- Development of wildlife discovery activities;
- School planting days at St Kilda West Beach and Westgate Park
- A waste audit and recycling program at St Mary's Primary
- Creation of garden mosaics



Harvest Festival Activities 2009  
St Mary's Primary with Caroline Packham



## Education for Sustainability

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The latest initiative at Elwood College is the Tomorrow's Leaders for Sustainability program facilitated by Caroline Packham from the EcoCentre and Chris Bray (a champion Elwood College teacher).

*This program helps young people understand and appreciate the key principles and issues of sustainability, while also gaining the knowledge and skills to become leaders in their chosen career.*

Student projects so far this year have included designing models for a sustainable and carbon neutral Elwood College and promoting household renewable energy options to the school community. Two students completed their work experience at the EcoCentre to explore careers in sustainability.



*Daphne Ng and Dennis Langadiotis on work experience with the Port Phillip EcoCentre*

*Funding partners for the facilitation of school programs in 2008/09 included: Holden, City of Port Phillip, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, ERM Foundation, City of Bayside, Melbourne Community Fund and Bendigo Bank Elwood Branch. Thanks also to Landcare, South East Water and CERES for their support. Funding for materials and infrastructure was obtained through additional grants and sponsorship. Programs are also offered on a fee for service basis to schools.*



*Boon Wurrung Indigenous Cultural Heritage Educator, Fay Stewart-Muir*

The Wildlife Discovery program has been developed and delivered with Boon Wurrung Foundation Educator Fay Stewart-Muir. The program enables students to investigate and care for the often unnoticed natural places at or near their school. Activities include water bug surveys, shoreline shell surveys, studying the role of indigenous plants and weeds, planting and weeding, documentation and photo journals, and learning about Indigenous cultural heritage.



*Elwood Secondary College connecting with landscape at St Kilda West Beach*

## Major Projects: Roadmap for Eco-living Centres

In recent years we've received frequent requests for advice on how to set up EcoCentre's; and in 2008 we partnered with Iramoo Environment Centre to explore the potential for collaboration between fellow centres. This led to a successful submission to the Sustainability Fund to develop guidelines for eco-living centres and explore and document the benefits of collaboration.

*The project draws upon the knowledge and experience of CERES, Iramoo, and Port Phillip EcoCentre to guide and inspire new and existing ecocentres to meet the emerging needs of local communities.*



Caroline Packham (left foreground) with 'eco-living stakeholder workshop participants'

In addition to the EcoCentre's Caroline Packham and Neil Blake, a highly skilled project team including Pat Armstrong, Brian Sharpley and Dr Colin Hocking has been assembled for the project. Eric Bottomley (CERES) is also providing advice to the project.

Other aims of the project include:

- consulting and developing relationships with key stakeholders;
- document and share best practice for ELCs through think tanks, roundtables, case studies and guidelines;
- conduct preliminary research about other Eco-living Centres in Victoria, Australia and internationally;
- evaluation to be conducted throughout project to be reported by February 2010.



Colin Hocking points to 'a place for an ecocentre'

The challenges presented by global warming induced climate change, and the opportunities this gives to focus in sustainability issues across waste, water, energy and biodiversity, requires existing programs (for example AuSSI Vic, Challenge2Change, Community Renewal, etc) to be significantly expanded through an active connected community of practitioners.

Evidence from behaviour change theory and practice overwhelmingly shows that people make most sense of these challenges and are most effective in inventing appropriate adaptive and mitigating responses if they are locally focused and collaborative. To enable this, people with the appropriate skills and knowledge will be required, connected through hubs of activity. Collaboration will enable dissemination of effective behaviour change strategies throughout the Victorian community.

Emerging Eco-living Centres and community groups are seeking support and guidance from existing centres. This project builds a collaborative response that draws on existing strategic planning and methods of implementing programs, and works to make these more effective. The project will allow participant organisations to evaluate and reflect on our processes and programs to date, and provide leadership and guidance to others seeking to initiate or further develop similar place-based approaches.

*Community hubs generate local action, build community and local identity, indigenous connections, and provide opportunities for localisation of goods and services (e.g. food production, resource recovery, smart resource use, energy saving and greenhouse gas reduction).*

## Community Strengthening & New Horizons Projects

### CarbonCut

*In 2008 The Port Phillip EcoCentre in partnership with South Port Uniting Care, received funding through the CoPP to conduct a small 'pilot' energy-efficiency project. A team of young people were recruited and trained to undertake simple residential audits and energy and water efficiency installations, and also promote behaviour change in low income households.*

Following the successful pilot, further funding was received through the Environment Protection Authority to retrofit 160 households. To optimize recruitment of households, the project conducted workshops at inner urban housing estates and invited tenants to attend and register their interest in receiving the service.

The tangible goals of CarbonCut 2 included training 4 people in installation of energy efficient devices, household energy use reduction methods, OH&S, and strong communication skills. Two translators (Greek and Russian) were trained in energy reduction principles to assist translating to Non-English Speaking Background communities.



The multicultural CarbonCut team: Jill, Anna, George, Kate, Nick, Neel, Andrew, Leo and Lisa.

The 'CarbonCut' team replaced incandescent lamps with compact fluorescent light globes, high flow shower roses with AAA water efficient shower roses and fitted draft seals around doors and windows. They also informed residents about refrigerator and water heater thermostat settings and stand-by power of appliances, and advised on how to understand utility bills.

*Recipients were primarily elderly and from diverse backgrounds. Evaluation of the service indicated that each household with a full retrofit could save up to \$400 per year (on average) on energy and water usage and that service recipients all warmly endorsed the service. Perhaps even more importantly, they reported feeling more comfortable in their homes.*

As in the pilot project the team delivered basic installations and energy-saving advice to low income households. At the time of writing, evaluation of CarbonCut 2 is nearing completion and will assist in future planning and project expansion. Environmental outcomes are to be fully assessed after a complete billing cycle, however immediate forecasts can be made based on the items installed.

Beyond all expectations, the CarbonCut 2 team serviced 200 households, significantly exceeding the project aim of 160. Whilst retrofits varied in scope, average households can benefit from utility bill savings of \$1,298.58 over the next three years. This amount is likely to be substantially greater, as energy prices are expected to rise over that time.

We are grateful for valuable contributions of Julian Donlen (CoPP), the Staff at McLennan Magasanik Associates (evaluation), Anna Rogalina (Russian Translator) George Phaedonos (Greek Translator) and Leo Hong (Swinburne Community Development & Welfare student).



# Community Strengthening and New Horizons Projects

## Port Phillip Urban Fresh Foods Network

The EcoCentre has been commissioned by the City of Port Phillip to convene the Port Phillip Urban Fresh Food Network (PPUFFN). The network improves local food security to ensure that all people have daily access to affordable, nutritious food. Quarterly forums are held enabling people to network, brainstorm ideas and to take action through community projects.



Wendy Van Dort, EcoCentre Community Foods

Wendy says:

*"Our modern food system is energy intensive and contributes to global warming. The more foods are processed, the more energy is needed for production. There's a lot of embodied energy in processed food. By growing our own food, we're moving towards a more sustainable future. We're reducing food miles, the distance food travels from paddock to plate."*

Wendy has promoted sustainable gardening practices through garden construction and maintenance projects at St Kilda Youth Services, Port Melbourne Uniting Church, Jackson Street Rooming House and several local schools.

Edible gardens inspire healthy eating and promote social activities based on growing, harvesting,

preparing and sharing food, and composting organic waste that would otherwise end up in landfill. By learning where fresh food comes from and how to prepare it, we are reconnecting people with knowledge that has been lost from past generations.

Guest speakers providing a wide range of perspectives on fresh food supply have included:

- Jonathon Pipke from Food Gardeners Alliance;
- Russell Shields from Second Bite;
- Ramana Dean from St Kilda Organic Food Coop;
- Catherine Harris from Coles supermarket;
- Tara Kelly from the Brotherhood of St Lawrence;
- Karen Sher from St Kilda Indigenous Nursery Coop; and
- Murali Nathan, an engineer with a particular interest in impacts of chemical agriculture on waterways.

*In 2009, Albert Park Rotary Club has funded the EcoCentre to build an edible garden for the Hospitality Employment and Training (HEAT) program run by St Kilda Youth Service.*

HEAT students will be able to use vegetables and herbs from the garden in their cooking classes. Students will tend the garden beds as part of their training experience and learn the health and environmental benefits of using fresh, organic and seasonal produce.

This garden construction will use the 'wicking' technique where an impermeable sheet lines the bottom of the bed so that water and nutrients are drawn from below by the plant roots. This reduces evaporation and therefore the amount of water required compared to conventional methods.



No food miles here... homegrown from the Eco patch!

## Affiliate Group Reports

### Friends of Westgate Park

The highlights of the year for the Friends of Westgate Park were

- Launch of a project to acquire more stormwater for the lakes;
- Volunteer Hours averaged 1,060 hours per month;
- Over 23,000 trees, shrubs, understory plants and grasses planted; and
- Large new areas transformed from weeds to indigenous plantings.

Frequent visitors to the Park have noticed a significant decrease in the water level in both the Freshwater and Saltwater Lakes following years of below average rainfall. The lakes are a real feature of the park and they provide an essential habitat for our bird population. FOWP has initiated a project to identify additional sources of storm water from surrounding areas that may be available to supplement existing flows into the lake.

We continue to reach out into the community with many different groups visiting the park over the last year. A major partnership called New Environment Directions (NED), was formed through the Port Phillip EcoCentre some years ago. This hard-working team of 17 participants from Central Bayside Adult Community Options help us out every few weeks.



Westgate 'dam' filled by Wharf Road stormwater run-off

Total volunteer hours for the year was close to 13,000, in which over 23,000 trees, shrubs, understory plants and grasses were planted.

Enhancing the habit values of the park continues as our prime goal and the last twelve months has seen a number of areas being finished and others started. The majority of the mulching and planting around the 'oval' near the barbecue shelter is finished. The group has also spent time on improving an adjacent area near the toilet block by clearing unsuitable non-indigenous vegetation. We are currently mulching the area and replacing the vegetation with appropriate plants with the landscape plan providing open and clear views. We installed a 5,000 litre tank to capture rainwater from the toilet block roof, and use this water to water-in new plants.



Our monthly bird surveys continued throughout the year. Due to lower than average rainfall a range of bird species are still present but in reduced numbers, especially water birds. On average we recorded 38.5 species for each survey over the twelve months from July 2008 to June 2009; the minimum number for any one survey being 34 species. Currently the total number of bird species recorded in the park stands at 120 (114 this time last year). Since regular surveys commenced in March 2007 a total of 103 species has been recorded.

We've completely transformed the small island in the Fresh Water Lake. Before the project started, this island resembled a pile of sand seen on a building site but covered in high weeds. Many wheel barrows of sand were shifted and used to create several new small islands in the Lake which will act as a refuge for birds. The all-time-low levels in the lake provided a unique window of opportunity for this construction.

Early in the year we completed significant coastal planting at the Yarra River. After 12 months this area beneath the river hill is filling out and becoming a significant addition to the park's vegetation. Another large project undertaken during the year was planting up the area known as "the Pass" on the way to the Yarra. Most other areas in the park received attention during the year but less so than the areas described above.

Ongoing maintenance of planted areas is a high priority of the group. We are well resourced in terms of volunteers, equipment and funding to continue our exacting maintenance regime. We are focused on creating areas in the park that provide a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors and at the same time provide valuable habitat for birds and animals.

We won four government grants during the year; two from the Commonwealth and two from the State. The largest was the Caring for our Country Community Coastcare grant from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Arts to revegetate along the lower Yarra to protect the river's biodiversity.

You can help by joining us on any Monday or Tuesday from 8.30 am - 4 pm or on the third Sunday of the month from 10 am.

Contact: Tony Flude

0400 770 254

## Affiliate Group Reports

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### St Kilda Indigenous Nursery Co-operative (SKINC)

SKINC is celebrating 15 years as a Co-operative next February! This is a major achievement which is difficult to measure. But to put it in context, consider that SKINC has propagated well over one million indigenous plants in that time; and they're all out there somewhere providing habitat for local wildlife.

During 2008, two long-term SKINC Coordinators (Rosey Haas and Vanessa Devereux) were enticed to new horizons. Their departure meant a great loss in terms of their botanical and horticultural knowledge and spell major change to the nursery operations. But after some energetic planning workshops and strategic decisions the nursery production is now back on track.

Rory White joined as a Co-ordinator in December



*Raxak, Penny, Charles, and Karen keeping the plants coming*

2008 and has now had a chance to settle in and prepare for the next growing season. Charles Saffroy of Growing Natives is continuing his work propagating and selling non-local native plants, as a sideline in our retail operation. Our other staff and volunteers have worked very hard over the past year to ensure our ongoing success. As a result, we're continuing to produce local native plants for the City of Port Phillip & the Friends of Westgate Park as well as many other community groups, residents and businesses.

SKINC is located at 525 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne

Contact: email [info@skinc.com.au](mailto:info@skinc.com.au) or telephone 9645 2477

### Friends of Port Melbourne's Foreshore (FoPMF)

FoMP is a care and lobby group for the foreshore in Port Melbourne. Our focus for practical work is Perc White Reserve – a small patch of coastal indigenous vegetation between the boundaries of Webb Dock and Todd Road. Our objectives for this Reserve are to protect and enhance it, to promote awareness of its environmental value, and to link it with neighbouring areas of indigenous vegetation at Westgate Park and Webb Dock East.



*FoPMF working bees... a great place to be!*

Our monthly working mornings between 9.30 am and 12 noon, invite care for this tiny, remaining piece of natural history. Dates remaining this year are Sunday September 6th (shell survey), Saturday October 3rd, Sunday November 8th and Saturday December 6th (shells again). The Friends are currently represented in a reference group which is looking at future planning for the reserve that acknowledges a range of issues, uses and interests. A management plan can then be passed through Council. We have high hopes for an outcome consistent with our goals.

A Federal government Coast care grant is enabling fencing and interpretive signage to protect remnants and better inform people of the area's significance. We welcome new members – if getting down low to weed and plant doesn't suit you physically, we'll utilise your grey matter instead. You can write, perform secretarial duties, or arrange notice board displays – tasks to suit interests and skills.

email: [fopmf@mc2.vicnet.net.au](mailto:fopmf@mc2.vicnet.net.au)

Snailmail: POBox 560 Port Melb 3207

phone: Anne 9645 1736 [www.fopmf.org.au](http://www.fopmf.org.au)

# The EcoCentre Family

## Management Committee

Elaine Wilkinson	President
Toby Richards	Vice President
Tony Flude	Secretary
John Gilcrist	Treasurer
Steve Pennells	
Rosey Haas	
Andrea Eales	
Noel Gilcrist	
Ann Callaghan	
Pam O'Neil	
Rory White	

## EcoCentre Public Fund Managers

Kay McKenzie
Louise Kyle
John Gilcrist

## Staff

Brett Gillespie (Mr Sheen)
Caroline Packham (Education and Projects)
Andrea Eales (Education)
David Giles (IT and Communications)
Yagoda Kurek (Accounts)
Neil Blake (Coordinator)
Wendy Van Dort (Community Foods & Gardens)
Nicole Wheatley (PPUFFN student placement)
Michelle Yang (CarbonCut coordinator)
Jill Robinson (CarbonCut coordinator)
Lisa Siciliano (CarbonCut coordinator)
George Phaedonos (CarbonCut translator)
Anna Rogalina (CarbonCut translator)
Kate Carpenter (CarbonCut retrofitter)
Nick Bishop (CarbonCut retrofitter)
Neel Bivalkan (CarbonCut retrofitter)
Andrew Ryan (CarbonCut retrofitter)
Leo Hong (CarbonCut Placement Student)

## Affiliate Groups 2008 - 2009

Ailsorts	Melbourne Social Forum (MSF) Inc.
Animal Liberation Victoria	Park Community Association Inc
Blue Hat Project	Permablitz
Blue Wedges Inc	South Port Uniting Care
Earthcare St Kilda Inc	St Kilda Community Gardens Club
Fly on the Wall Theatre	St Kilda Indigenous Nursery Cooperative
Friends of Westgate Park	St Kilda Music & Poetry Inc
Friends of Port Melbourne Foreshore	St Kilda Organic Food Cooperative Inc (SKOF)
GaiaVic Inc	Veg Out Community Gardens Inc.
Homeground Services	

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## Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc.

Located in St Kilda Botanical Gardens (corner Blessington and Herbert Streets)

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St Kilda, VIC 3182

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**ABN: 66 852 809 680**

**Incorporated Association No. A0038897K**

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Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. is a Waste-Wise Organisation

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