

**From the President****G'day one and all,**

The year is drawing rapidly to a close, which is rather scary when one considers the amount of work ahead for Team FOD. Wild weather put paid to some of the weeding days, but the bush maintenance volunteers are a resilient lot and when it wasn't considered dangerous, they were out there doing their bit.

Unfortunately, the weeds are also resilient!

What would we do without our volunteers? Unfortunately, volunteer numbers continue to decrease while those remaining have ages that continue to increase. If magic were to prevail then matters should be reversed.

Since 2022, which had a wet winter, Melbourne Water (MW) contractors worked along the pipeline that runs beside the catch drain and where Team Water Watch (WW) used an access track. Heavy machinery mangled the track so badly that Team WW was unable to drive in, and it's been difficult ever since. On meeting with Parks Vic (PV) and Melbourne Water (MW), Graham and I were asked why and who chose that particular site. We were unable to give a definitive answer at the time. Afterwards, doing some digging in the archives, and asking those where there at the time, it was discovered that that particular track and access to water site was determined by PV, MW and DFI in 2011 when the waterwatch activity was devised. It was also discovered that the macroinvertebrate surveys began in 2015. Originally there were six WW sites, but now there are four and similar numbers for macroinvertebrates. With the passage of time water disappeared from two sites, and at another negotiation of mud made the exercise rather precarious.

One can but hope the fire ants don't reach this far south. They seem to be spreading across the country. Since they have no natural predators, human intervention appears the only way to deal with them. Forming rafts during floods they float about until reaching dry ground where they set up a new colony. Somehow, they sneaked under the radar and were discovered in the northern climes of the country. Pain from their bites is excruciating, and if it's anything like an attack from jack jumpers then the thought of having them down here is horrendous.

The DFI is holding its AGM on November 9th at Balnarring small hall at 10am. I won't be standing for president again, as it's time for new blood to take the reins, but I will continue coordinating the Friends of Daangean group and editing the newsletter.

Marnie Fitzsimons, President

Contents

President's Report	1
Foundation News	2
Friends of Daangean Update	2
Water Quality Surveying	3
Bird Monitoring	6
Parks Vic News	9
Biolinks Project	10
Opinion Corner	12

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2024-2025 DFI Council:

Marnie Fitzsimons (President & FOD Co-ordinator), Roger Richards (Sec), Sue Milton (Treasurer), Jamie Edgerton, Michael Mann, Annabel Richards, Jill McIver

The following 2024-2025 member groups are represented on Committee:

Birdlife Australia; Mornington Environment Assn.; Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora & Fauna Assn; BERG

To join the Friends of Daangean (FOD), contact Marnie Fitzsimons at devilbendfoundation@gmail.com

EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm on a bit of a learning curve with a new PC with Windows 11. Some little electronic creature keeps asking if I need help. I don't, and I keep sending it off with a flea in its ear. Strangely it takes no offence because it comes back next time I turn on the machine. I do worry that I might inadvertently click on it and lose my way, requiring an SES rescue mission! I prefer the once-used animated paperclip.

FOUNDATION NEWS

FRIENDS of DAANGEAN (FOD)

Team FOD was out and about on June 28th at Botaurus Wetland. There were seven of us doing good work. It was pleasing to see a goodly number of felled pines; however, they were higgledy-piggledy over the ground making it difficult to negotiate a way into the targeted woody weeds. A couple of logs came in handy for seats at smoko. Several walkers and cyclists passed by but there were no offers of help, even with a reward of a cuppa and a bikkie.

July weeding day was deferred to August 2nd when there were four of us. Some of the boneseed are big enough and tough enough for a chainsaw. On the lower ground amongst the pines some could be rocked back and forth then pulled out when loose enough at the roots. Along the dam bank near the track and on the top is a mass of blackberry, and over the far side towards the cow paddocks there's a forest of boneseed and sallow wattle, although there are not many pines over there.

I thought I'd lost my phone so the hunt was on. Although Annabel rang it there wasn't a peep in the scrub. Lo and behold, it was located in the car saying it had two missed calls. Silly fool. It should have stayed in my pocket instead of hiding in the car!

Hannah from PV said the downed pines was a chainsaw training

exercise. Further training could've been in how to clean up after yourself and to give the weeding team easier access.

I took a turn through Woodland Break after weeding just to see if the crop of pitto was coming along nicely. Which it was. Greenhoods were flowering along the track and bird orchid leaves were making an appearance.

The annual Community Weeding Day, instigated by Sam Pollard many moons ago, was to be on Saturday August 30th. However, it was postponed due to heavy winds and the danger of falling limbs. The following Saturday came with more clement weather and it was quite pleasant

scrambling around in the scrub. Five of us (Annelie, David, Jamie, Julie and I) performed good works amid the blossoms, all golden yellow. The previous week would have had more hands on deck, but the subsequent week didn't suit several people. The bush was devoid of all birds. Usually, little scrub birds would be going crook at the intruders in their patch, and being the start of nesting time, they are concerned.

Quite a number of passers-by passed by. Some spoke with us, some had kids interested in what we were doing bashing around, and still others who looked neither right nor left (which makes one wonder what they might have found interesting). They looked as though they would've been happier



Morning tea seating with Annabel & Lisa - MF



Botaurus Wetland -MF



Botaurus Wetland – MF

wandering the supermarkets and department stores looking for bargains. A man armed with a fishing rod and with a tot in tow was confident of a catch. He wasn't gone long and returned empty handed, and I wonder who became fed-up first, him or the tot. He did at least speak to us on their way both to and from the fruitless expedition.

Botaurus Wetland on September 27th had a FOD team of four. Annabel and I worked on the flat amid the entanglement of pines, while Roger and Jamie toiled over the hill. Boneseed bloomed through the fallen pines and pitto perfume wafted sweetly upon the zephyr. Big guns (Hannah and Tim from PV) came and dealt some hefty blows to some stuff too big for us: pittos and pines. Up on the dam Disa was coming up



Disa baracteata bud - MF

winter?

with their small flower buds in the centre of their leaf rosettes. Numerous sun orchids were in bud and the leaves of leek/onion orchids were up. I think there might be a hole in the fence as there appeared to be fairly fresh cow tracks in the softer clay down the side of dam bank, although on closer inspection they could be deer tracks.

Birds-wise, a couple of ducks flew up from the dam, Ibis flew over, as did a flock of yellow-tailed black cockies. Some rowdy yack-yack cockies conversed in a tree, and the bell miners tinkled away amid the swamp gums towards the road.

Beside the track into Botaurus Wetland is a large eucalypt, possibly a manna gum, that is dead except for one healthy limb. It looks strange and stands out from the surrounding trees. Is there a disease within its system, underground or perhaps the dry



Habitat trees - MF

Marnie Fitzsimons

VOLUNTEER WATER-QUALITY SURVEYING

Waterwatch Report

The Water Watch (WW) team has been out every month to our four sites (when there's water in the creek) conducting water testing to



Cumbungi thicket Site 2 - GW

native fish, and invertebrates.

make sure the water quality remains suitable for all the bugs, fish, birds and the plants to survive and thrive. Monitoring habitat is also part of our job, and noticeably the Cumbungi reeds are growing thickly and spreading rapidly. Cumbungi reeds are good for providing wildlife habitat and controlling erosion but can be problematic in dams and waterways, and possibly the catch drains, by blocking water flow and reducing water capacity. The effect can be seen at the catch drain near Bittern Reservoir as it is choking the drain. It can become an invasive weed colonizing large areas and suppressing other vegetation. In Queensland, this plant is considered an invasive weed. There are significant ecological benefits, including the

provision of essential cover, nesting sites, and food sources for water birds and other native wildlife such as aquatic insects,

The dense growth can also help to stop the banks from eroding. Historically, they have been used by Indigenous people for food and fibre, as well as for weaving. Also, the water levels have dropped and are exceptionally low due to poor rainfalls over winter which is altering habitats for all the inhabitants. The low water levels are allowing the scrub to encroach onto the banks where the water once was. With summer and hot weather approaching, if we do not get good rainfall soon the water level will continue to drop.

Both reservoirs still continue to meet Melbourne Water's high water quality standards. However, Bittern's conductivity rises significantly as its water level falls, whereas Devilbend remains largely unchanged.

During the next few weeks we will be doing our spring macroinvertebrate monitoring. It will be interesting to see what if any effect the water levels have had on the water bugs.

On Wed 24th Richard Akers from Melbourne Water met us at the Devilbend carpark to replace our depleted or nearing-use-by-date chemicals that we use for water testing. Richard participated at each location to assist with water sample testing and to conduct safety assessments, as circumstances had shifted in certain areas. He also shared details about future upcoming projects planned for the park. All the data we collect is entered onto the Melbourne water website and is available to the public through the Melbourne Water portal.

https://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au/water_data_portal.php

Cheers Graham White

Dissolved Oxygen Saturation

What is it? Dissolved oxygen measures how much oxygen is dissolved in the water. This can vary naturally from top to bottom of a waterway, as well as across the day.

Why is it important? All aquatic plants and animals need dissolved oxygen to live. It can be produced by plants in the water or by air mixing with water (e.g., wind blowing across or in a waterfall).

What does it mean? Dissolved oxygen can be reduced by bacteria or algae growth, or nutrient runoff from surrounding land. Low dissolved oxygen will harm most aquatic animals.

How is it measured? Dissolved oxygen is measured by Water Watch volunteers in the field using an electronic meter. These results are reported as percent saturation or milligrams per litre of water (mg/L).

Nitrate - Nitrogen

What is it? Nitrogen is a natural element found in plants, animals, air, water, and soil. It is essential for life.

Why is it important? Nitrogen is important for plant growth, and excess nitrogen can cause the excessive growth of algae and other plants.

What does it mean? Forestry, land clearing, pea farming, fertilizer use, and wastewater runoff may all increase nitrogen, leading to algae blooms and waterways clogged by aquatic plants. This can kill fish.

How is it measured? Waterwatch volunteers use chemicals in a test kit ('reagents') to tint the water purple if there is nitrate-nitrogen present. The higher the nitrate in the water, the darker the colour, which the volunteer reads off a corresponding scale. The results are reported as milligrams per litre (mg/L).

pH

What is it? pH measures how acidic or alkaline the water is.

Why is it important? Fresh water is usually around neutral (pH 7). Animals and plants are very sensitive to changes in pH.

What does it mean? A large increase or decrease in pH will have a dramatic effect on the species found within the waterway. At pH levels less than 6 and greater than 9, harmful effects may occur.

How is it measured? The pH of water samples is measured in the field by Waterwatch volunteers using an electronic meter. Results are reported as a number on the pH scale ranging from 1 – 14.

Electrical Conductivity

What is it? Electrical conductivity is a measure of how much salt is dissolved in the water. It is natural to have some salt in our waterways, but the amount can fluctuate.

Why is it important? Deforestation and land clearing can cause the water table to rise, bringing with it large amounts of salt from underground. After the water evaporates, high concentrations of salt remain, which can eventually find its way into waterways.

What does it mean? Many species of fish have adapted to fresh water and are unable to survive once the water becomes too salty. The higher the electrical conductivity, the less tolerable the water is for humans and farm animals to drink.

How is it measured? The electrical conductivity of water samples is measured in the field by Water Watch volunteers using an electronic meter. Results are reported in micro-Siemens per centimetre ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$).

Turbidity

What is it? Turbidity measures how clear the water is.

Why is it important? Clear water is necessary for aquatic plants to grow, producing food and oxygen for other species within the water.

What does it mean? Murky or cloudy water restricts light from passing down into the water, which restricts plant growth. The floating particles can also increase water temperatures, cover plants, and fill up pools. Turbidity may be due to erosion and habitat destruction.

How is it measured? Turbidity is measured by Water Watch volunteers in the field using a turbidity meter or tube. The results are reported as nephelometric turbidity units (NTU).

Ammonium

What is it? Ammonium is a form of nitrogen, a natural element found in plants, animals, air, water, and soil. It is essential for life.

Why is it important? Nitrogen is important for plant growth, and excess nitrogen can cause the excessive growth of algae and other plants.

What does it mean? Forestry, land clearing, pea farming, fertilizer use, and wastewater runoff may all increase nitrogen, leading to algae blooms and waterways clogged by aquatic plants. This can kill fish.

How is it measured? Ammonium in water is measured in the field by Waterwatch volunteers using an electronic meter. The measurements are expressed in milligrams per litre (mg/L).

Interpreting River Health Data, Waterwatch Victoria

Water Watch after thoughts

It's a while ago, and my how time flies, that for some reason Water Watch monitoring for June was cancelled. However, July 9th saw us back into it, albeit a few hands down. At site 2 (EDV300) the testing equipment was set up near the gate due to the impassibility of the once-accessible drive-in track. Here we encountered some contactors on the Disa hunt, but in my opinion, they were a trifle early so there would've been a lot of walking and not much removal because there wasn't likely to be anything to see. Water levels were down at all sites.

July 31st made up for missing June. Due to roadworks, my trip across to Devilbend Reservoir felt like it was via the Bass Coast! Grebes, coots and swans were seen on Devilbend, also at Bittern, and there were lots of calling frogs at all sites. Pink and white epacris were seen flowering along the catch drain at site 2, and beautifully blossoming Spanish heath at site 1. A few small plants at site 3 will become lower and woodier with successive mowing. A sunny and pleasant day, though a cool breeze came up while we were at Bittern.

The water temperature at Bittern was 14.7° at 11am

and at DB it was 10.3° at 9.30am. Temperature

affects physical, chemical and biological processes

within bodies of water and therefore plays an important role in their water health and quality. In lakes, dams and ponds the temperature of the surface water is often several degrees warmer than that near the bottom.

This occurs because warmer surface water is less dense than cold and therefore floats on top of the cold



WW Site 2 access track current state - MF

water. The surface and bottom water bodies are said to be separated by a *thermocline*, which may be disturbed by strong winds or through seasonal variations in air temperature.



Michael & Richard in the rain Site 3 - MF

was an inconvenience having to walk further to the collection site, but we have to bear with it until the ground dries out. Rain developed while at Bittern so we relocated to an undercover DB picnic table for the testing side of things.

A macroinvertebrate training day is proposed with Melbourne Water on Wednesday October 29th, which will be the spring water bug survey.

Next year, if given enough notice, it's proposed to do a water bug test before and after trout release to see what differences there might be in the Devilbend

macroinvertebrate populations.

Marnie Fitzsimons

Team WW had all hands to the pump on Tuesday Aug 26th. It was a cold and windy day and the testing for site 1 (EDV400) took place in the shelter of the pine trees along the track. Water levels were down considerably at all sites. Epacris, Spanish heath, boneseed and sallow wattle were all flowering. There were lots of coots on both waters and some young purple swamp-hens with their flicking tails poking about along the Bittern catch drain at site 3 (EBI100).

The full WW team of five gathered on Wednesday 24th September. Water levels were down even more, and the track into the site 2 sample collecting area was firm underfoot, so gummies weren't needed. Richard Akers

said
it



Once a waterbug collecting site - MF

BIRD MONITORING REPORT



White-bellied Sea Eagle - MM

Thanks to Michael for the bird photos. Good stuff as usual

Yellow Robin - MM



Yellow-tail Black Cockatoo - MM



Some Wetland Birds of Devilbend Natural Features Reserve

Part 3. Family *Phalacrocoracidae*

Cormorants and Darter

During the Devilbend Reserve monthly counts we have recorded five birds of the family *Phalacrocoracidae*: **Great Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Pied Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Darter**

In the Cormorant species both male and female are alike, but Great Cormorant and Pied Cormorant females are smaller than the males. Great Cormorant 75cm-1m; Pied cormorant 65cm - 85cm; Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants 60 cm. Darter male mostly glossy black, female head to upper neck mottled, underparts white. size 85cm.

Little Black Cormorant - MM



Great Cormorant - MM

Great Cormorant have been recorded in 95% of the monthly surveys at the Reserve, Pied Cormorant 10%, Little Pied Cormorant 95%, Little Black Cormorant 75%, Darter 20%.



Little Pied Cormorant - MM



Darter - MM

Movements

The great Cormorant is considered mainly nomadic. They are almost always present at the Reserve. The other Cormorants are sedentary and nomadic. The Pied Cormorant is an infrequent visitor, but we have seen them flying overhead occasionally. Little Black Cormorants commonly form flocks of up to 15 birds.

Roosting

Great Cormorants often roost at the end of the Long Spit (about 8 birds) when not foraging. Little Pied Cormorants roost alone or in small numbers at the shoreline, on the fishing platform, concrete infrastructure, or the trees of the decommissioned northern farm dam. Little Black Cormorants often roost together in a close group at the long spit and also in trees at the Northern Farm Dam. Darters roost on rocks and low stumps by the reservoir shores and are frequently found at the decommissioned farm dams roosting on low branches near the water's edge.

Foraging

The Cormorants feed on fish, crustacea and small aquatic animals. They feed in water by diving. The great Cormorant and the little black Cormorant sometimes feed in companies to herd fish. The Darter dives and swims under water when feeding. It seeks fish and other aquatic animals.

Breeding and nesting.

The breeding season of the Cormorants is variable, mainly occurring between March and November. They all nest in trees: usually high up, seeking the more isolated and remote parts such as the more inaccessible parts of the decommissioned farm dams. The nests are made from sticks lined with bark. We have no records of Pied Cormorants nesting at Devilbend Reserve.

The Darter will commonly nest from October to March. It makes nests in remote trees or bushes overhanging water at various heights. These are made of a platform of sticks lined with twigs and green leaves.

Recommendations.

1. Strict checking of fishhooks and lines.
2. Careful protection of nesting and roosting tree zones around reservoir and former farm dams.
3. Strict penalties for disobeying signs banning dogs.

Roger Richards

Coordinator Devilbend and Woods Reserve Bird Monitoring teams

PARKS VIC NEWS

Devilbend Update

- We have a confirmed deer program budget. We are hoping it will run within the next six months, although it's very early in the planning stages
- Spring has sprung and so have our more invasive weeds including Disa and Watsonia. We have clear priority areas to manage these populations and to reduce risk of spreading via machinery to other park areas.
- Turtle season is also underway. Citizen Science Crew are ramping up their monitoring efforts ready for the nesting season. Please contact Hansi Wegner on 0432 307 634 if you would like to be involved. This year we have five Deakin University students helping out with the turtle monitoring program as part of their placement requirements.
- Melbourne Water are underway with their weed works along the catch drain. They're doing great work throughout the park as well as within Woods Reserve.
- Melbourne Water are well underway with the planning of the Devilbend Creek Vegetation Improvement Project across specified sites of the catch drain. They are targeting Southern Toadlet habitat values and ceasing mowing in areas to encourage natural regeneration of existing native species
- The annual Park run was successful
- Lots of filming for major blockbusters has occurred over the past few months, so keep an eye out on the screens to see if you can spot the Devilbend Landscape.

Gemma Hocking

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Mon -Thurs
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Parks Victoria respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners, their cultures, knowledge and their continuing connection to and cultural obligations to care for their Country

BIOLINKS UPDATE

Mornington Peninsula Landcare Update

National Landcare Conference Special – by Landcare Facilitator Chantal Morton

I was honoured to represent the Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network, along with Zali Clark of MP



Welcome to Country - CM

Intrepid at the National Landcare Conference on the Gold Coast last week from the 21 – 24 September. It was an incredible experience, filled with interesting keynote speakers, panel discussions, presentations, a field trip, as well as plenty of opportunity to share ideas and network with old friends and new.

The conference kicked off on Sunday, with the Next Gen Summit, starting with a beautiful Welcome to Country by Kombumerri man Max Dillon. Our MC for the day was Lindsay Davies, Guwamu/Kooma man, who respectfully returned the Welcome with a heartfelt thank you, encouraging all Landcare groups to return the

respect shown at all Welcome to Country ceremonies with gratitude. Lots of truly inspiring young people

were in attendance,

sharing the good work being done by our youth across the country, along with older Landcarers showing their support and unpacking how we can help young people to protect the places they love – after all old people were young once too. From helping with personal and professional development opportunities, to removing the OHS and administrative burdens, we were encouraged to work together to codesign projects, drawing on the extensive knowledge and expertise of the older generation and combining it with the energy, ideas and fresh perspectives of the younger generation. We joined in celebrating 10 years of Intrepid Landcare Australia, heard from Kurt Jones from Co-Exist Australia and Bryce Watts-Parker, finalist and winner of the 2025 Next Gen Landcare Award. There were plenty of opportunities for Networking over delicious food. The day concluded with each attendee making a commitment to the environment and pledging that together they are the leaders of tomorrow, but more importantly, the changemakers of today.

The next two days of the conference were jam packed, with so much to recount, so I will just share with you the highlight presentations (for me personally and professionally). The main presentation that struck me as most informative and timely was delivered by Yass Landcare Network. At Yass, they have been using external expertise and technology to adapt to the effects of a changing climate, in particular looking at genetic diversity to make revegetation projects more resilient in a warming environment. The group



Day 1 - Next Generation Summit - CM

focussed on species most likely to tolerate warmer conditions, mixing seed from their local EVCs with the same species seed from different (nearby) provenances based on projected weather and using interactive mapping tools. I will be investigating the mapping tool further to see if it is suitable for our needs on the Mornington Peninsula and look at the potential to codesign a project based on my learnings – watch this space!

Another interesting, albeit alarming, presentation was delivered by Dr Anthony Rice, an expert in the field of Integrated Pest Management. Dr Rice argued that we are addicted to pesticides, and that chemicals (some more than others) are responsible for the global decline of invertebrate species - the insect apocalypse. His talk focused mostly on the common use of Neonicotinoids (e.g. brand name *Confidor*), a systemic and highly soluble insecticide that persists in soil and is implicated in bee colony collapse in the US and 1000 times more harmful than DDT. The chemical is widely used in crop situations and *pet treatments*. There is no need to label seeds treated with Neonicotinoids in Australia (you need to ask), and just one treated seed can harm up to 130,000 bees. Ninety-eight percent of the long-lived chemical enters the soil and in turn is taken up by other surrounding vegetation. A solution lies in integrated pest management and the avoidance of Nicotinoids. Dr Rice explained that there are plenty of good practices that can reduce our reliance on pesticides, including attracting beneficial insects through planting or establishing beneficial insect sentinels where there is no nearby vegetation. And while chemicals may not be able to be avoided altogether, you can substitute Nicotinoids with a less harmful insecticide by looking for a mode of action (in the chemical Safety Data Sheet) with a higher number mode of action, which has been developed more recently and may be more targeted. The MPLN is doing good work in this space with the establishment of biolinks and on farm shelterbelt plantings being part of the solution, as well as the provision of Integrated Pest Management (IMP) information. To access the MPLN guide to IMP and attracting beneficial insects you can start by visiting <https://mplandcare.org.au/resources/pests-and-diseases/>. I was very shocked to learn that I too may have inadvertently been using this chemical in treating my own dog for fleas, so please be vigilant and avoid the unnecessary use of Nicotinoids!

Other fabulous talks I attended included presentations by:

- South Gippsland Landcare Network on community-led deer control, and in particular their journey to acknowledging that something must be done and the use of technologies such as 4G cameras, Evorta software, Deer Scan and WhatsApp in tackling the deer problem.
- Biolinks Alliance on their Glideways project, which has connected a fragmented landscape by focussing on reestablishing native glider habitat (I drew some similarities between this approach and the MP Koala Conservation Landcare groups efforts to establish Koala habitat).
- Kattanning Landcare's use of dam covers and dam enhancement for water security, and the multitude co-benefits to farms, from biodiversity to reductions in *E. coli* and the increase in live weight gain of cattle.
- Tahnee Burgess from Landcare Victoria (LV) spoke about LV's carbon outreach program which is helping to better inform landholders about Low Emission farming and addressing misinformation.
- Springfield Lakes Landcare group have been using technology, including various apps (iNat, Frog ID, Great Fungi Map, e-bird) and echolocation for bats, to help document biodiversity and water quality in their catchment.
- Northern and Yorke Landscape Board's Max Bar was a fantastic example of how people and partnerships have been integral to their predator control on the Yorke Peninsula, SA.

I also attended numerous panel discussions. I was intrigued by one panel member in particular: a talk on the use of AI in Landcare. Darryl Lyons, CEO and Founder of Rainstick Australia detailed his use of technology that is based on ancient Aboriginal wisdom. By using distinct frequencies (VEFTs) he has been able to significantly increase food crop yields, cost effectively increasing farm productivity and nutrition availability without changing on-farm infrastructure – ingenious and fascinating – this could very well be a way of looking at the past to create a sustainable food future?

Another takeaway was that Aboriginal knowledge must shape how we care for Country. Two-way science, cultural protocols and informed consent are essential to the way we do business, not extras. Knowledge is

power, but it is also personal. Traditional Owners do not have to share their knowledge, but when they do, we must honour it properly.

With the conference all but over, it was time for a field day to look at 'Partnerships in Action' with Gold Coast City Council (Naturally GC), Australian Association of Bush Regenerator (AABR) and Austinville Landcare in the beautiful Austinville valley. The Naturally GC model of local government showcased an exceptional example of how this council is putting their money where their mouth is, moving away from a Las Vegas glitter strip to a liveable city with nature at its core. It is ensuring that the "Our



Q'land Parks using Felix for Cat & Fox Control - CM

Natural City" strategy is being implemented, with no further expansion of the urban footprint. Through true partnerships with landholders and Landcare, it is the main driver for the Gold Coast becoming a truly

natural city, through maximum reach and commitment to the goal

of 51% native vegetation cover. Austinville Valley catchment is a buffer between World Heritage rainforest and the Gold Coast urban sprawl. We met with Walter Mayr, president of Austinville Landcare and winner of the 2023 Individual Landcare Award, who showed us the work Landcare has achieved on public and private land. We witnessed firsthand the benefit of approaching restoration of a previously degraded landscape through naturally assisted regeneration. Very little planting was needed: instead, funds and manpower were directed towards removing weeds,

allowing the bush to come back on its own and predator control (feral cats and foxes out – potoroos and pademelons in). The Gold Coast has shown what is possible through partnership with volunteers and conservation agreements with landholders – large scale bush regeneration done right.

As you can see, it was a very eventful and inspiring four days. I would like to thank Melbourne Water and the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program for making my attendance at the 2025 National Landcare Conference possible.



Austinville Valley-Partnership in Action - CM

OPINIONS & OTHER COMMENTS CORNER

Disclaimer: The views expressed in here do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or DFI

BONESEED

One of the prolific weeds at Devilbend and Bittern is Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*). It has been declared a weed in all states and territories. Originally from South Africa, Boneseed is a Weed of National Significance (WONS). It is a smallish evergreen shrub reaching 2-3 metres in height. It bears a profusion of yellow daisy-like flowers followed by bunches of fruit containing hard coated seeds, which can remain viable in the soil for more than 10 years. Mature plants can produce up to 50,000 seeds, and the plants can

live from 10-20 years. Seeds can be spread over considerable distances by native and feral animals, and birds.

Boneseed is an aggressive invader of bushland. Without effective control it has the potential to increase and become more abundant within native undisturbed bushland ranging from dunes, mallee country, native grasslands, scrub and woodlands.

There appears to be a biological control agent - the Leaf-buckle mite (*Aceria* sp) (Hervey et al) 2003

<https://weeds.org.au/profiles/boneseed/>

See the link for detailed information on planning for and undertaking control of Boneseed as seen in 'BoneseedManagement Manual' (available at : -



Boneseed in flower - MF

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/boneseed-management-manual-current-management-and-control-options-for-boneseed>

Websites to peruse:

Mornington Environment Assoc Inc – www.morningtonenviro.org.au

<https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au>

Wiley Online Library – <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/emr.12467>

Echidna Research & Conservation – echidnacs@adelaide.edu.au

Dirt Radio – <https://www.3cr.org.au>

<https://www.thebushfirefoundation.org>

<https://www.dungbeetles.com.au>

<https://weeds.org.au>

<https://invasives.com.au> – Invasive Species Council

www.pestsmart.org.au

<https://www.nature.com>

<http://www.wildthingsaustralia.org.au>



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DONATION TO DEVILBEND FOUNDATION Inc.

WE ARE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE ORGANISATION! HELP US TO RAISE FUNDS TO MAKE DEVILBEND A WORLD CLASS CONSERVATION RESERVE!

All donations over \$2 can be claimed by donors as tax-deductible, so do help us raise funds & benefit yourself as this financial year comes to a close through our Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund as we are listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under Section 6.1.1 sub-section 30-55 (1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Yes, I would like to donate \$..... to the Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund

☐ I attach a cheque, or postal order addressed to:

Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council
Attention: Devilbend Foundation Inc.
PO Box 9
Hastings
Vic 3915

☐ I will use the Foundation's Bendigo Bank, Mornington: BSB 633 000, 'Devilbend Conservation Reserve Trust Fund Account' number 130522204 & let you know that I donated to this account direct (Ring DFI Treasurer Sue Milton on 0407 350 175)

Name..... Signed.....

Address.....Date.....

“STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROACH” BOOKLET

Please send me a copy of the Foundation's 20-page coloured publication '*Devilbend Reserve – A Strategic Planning Approach*'. Post form to Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council

Attention: Devilbend Foundation Inc.

PO Box 9
Hastings
Vic 3915

Name.....Phone.....

Email.....

Address.....

FRIENDS OF DAANGEAN VOLUNTEERS

I'm interested in being a Devilbend Foundation supporter as a volunteer in the Friends of Daangean. Please keep me in touch & note my name & contact details here.

Please contact Marnie Fitzsimons on 0427539576 or marniefitz1@gmail.com or post this to PO Box 9 Hastings 3915

Name..... (Please print)

Phone.....Mobile.....

Email.....

My special interest in Devilbend Reserve is.....

Signed.....Date.....