

Nov_Dec

Merry Christmas 2017



Number 155

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Wetland Warbler

Clamorous Reed-Warbler

AGM PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Kate Spillane

It has been a challenging but once again successful year for the Friends of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Incorporated due to the commitment of our dedicated volunteers and committee members. Over the past 12 months we have increased the opening hours of the bird hide whilst continuing to improve the visitor experience, facilitated numerous visits and information sessions to a wide range of interest groups, worked with other like minded organisations to conserve our wetland reserves and to protect the flora and fauna, carried out numerous tree plantings, lodged objections to council to ensure our wetlands continue to be protected, applied for and were successful in a number of community grants, represented the interests of FEWSI on a number of committees and launched a successful Facebook page. All of these achievements is clear evidence that this group continues to successfully achieve our purpose and can clearly be attributed to the continued effort of volunteers and committee members. We have also had a number of celebrations which has been a terrific way to bring us all together to celebrate these milestones and our love of the wetlands.

The core committee has consisted of **Robin Clarey** as Vice President, Bird Hide and Education Centre Coordinator and Newsletter editor, **Margaret Hunter** as Secretary and Visitor liaison, **Sue Telfer** as Treasurer, **Rex Chugg** as Tree Planting Coordinator, **Inez van Polanen** as Membership Database Manager, **Charles Saffroy** and **Trevor Shewan** as Committee Members and **Kate Spillane** as President.

Early this year FESWI was asked to contribute one of our committee members to



Guest speaker Gio addresses the meeting. See Page 4

be part of the management group of the Port Phillip Conservation Council and **Matthew Mitchell** left FESWI's committee to take on this important role. **Matt** also continues to support the group in many ways including the role as Website Manager.

Alison Kuitert has continued to strongly support the committee particularly in regards to the bird hide, our Facebook page and the development of our new coloring books, which will be coming soon. **Cheryl Meier** has continued to assist with the newsletter distribution and **Kirsty Costa** and **Ian Williams** have ensured that our Facebook page is continually updated with relevant and captivating information. If you have never joined Facebook now is the time.

FESWI ACTIVITIES

Level Crossing Removals

Within days of the 2016 AGM, the Committee met to discuss the impact of the Level Crossing Removals on the Frankston Line. FESWI made a number of submissions to ensure that an Environmental Impact Statement and a Controlled Action was carried out. The Committee also met with Tim Richardson MP to voice the concerns of our members about

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AGM PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED

these works. This has been a very challenging space for the committee to ensure that the group was represented at all essential meetings and information and feedback sessions. FESWI were successful in obtaining membership on the Edithvale Level Crossing Removal Community Reference Group. We will continue to update you as things progress however things are looking hopeful and we look forward to the findings of the EES being released in February 2018.

World Wetlands Day

FESWI celebrated World Wetlands Day on 2 February 2017 by opening the bird hide and conducting a walk around Edithvale South. 41 people participated, including Mark Dreyfus QC MP. It was an excellent opportunity for the group to see the wetlands from a different perspective.

As part of the celebrations artist Zoe Wood was available at the Education Centre to demonstrate to visitors how to paint birds. On the day the Centre was manned by FEWSI volunteers, Sue Telfer arranged painting materials for children so that they could paint with Zoe.

Clean Up Australia Day

FESWI participated in Clean Up Australia Day on 5 March 2017, by coordinating a group of volunteers to collect rubbish around the Bird Hide and Education Centre car parks, the Longbeach Trail, Edithvale Common and along Edithvale Road. 16 volunteers collected 10 enormous bags of rubbish.

Bird Hide

Extended Hours

Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers we have been able to extend our opening hours of the Bird Hide. The hide is now open every Saturday and Sunday from 1pm – 5pm.

Repairs and Maintenance

Robin Clarey has continued to ensure that required maintenance of the hide has been undertaken to ensure that it is well maintained and safe for all that visit. Great thanks goes to Rex Chugg and Jim Wilson for their time and effort in assisting in some of these maintenance activities. Robin is always thinking ahead and makes relevant grant applications to attempt to offset the cost of the maintenance activities.

Licenses and Permits

Discussions continue with building authorities and Melbourne Water in regards to licenses and permits that facilitate our continued use of the hide and Duck Inn. We thank George Madden for his ongoing advice in regards to these complex and important matters.

Honour Board

Sue Telfer has been working on an Honour Board for those that made a significant donation to the Bird Hide Restoration Project. Sue has a display of the material set up today for your perusal.

Edithvale Seaford Wetland Education Centre

FESWI continues to work with Melbourne Water to open the Education Centre every second and fourth Sunday of the month from 1pm- 5pm.

Guided Tours & Visits

It has been a particularly busy year for FESWI particularly Margaret and Robin in facilitating visits, wetlands walks and information sessions to the wider community in order to educate them about the wetlands, their significance and management. The type of visitors varies greatly, including Scout Groups, Rotary, Primary and High Schools and Women's Auxiliary Groups. We even had a group of retired engineers this past year.

Seaford Tree Planting Working Bees

Planting started in May, mainly in the buffer zone along Austin Road. Working Bees were conducted on the first Sunday of every month for two hours. In May, June and July 380 tubes were planted. In August, some of our members supported National Tree Planting Day in the wetlands in an area off Old Wells Road. Over 2,000 plants were planted. Many thanks to Matt Green (Ranger) and his team, and Kim at the Frankston Indigenous Nursery for their work in making this all happen. In September, 170 tubes were planted and in October weeding was carried out in one of our earlier planted beds - seven large bags were collected. Working bees are now finished for 2017. A big thank you to Rex Chugg and our working bee members – Lorraine, Colin, Greg, Dawn, Mike, Alex, Robin, Denise, and Elena.

Working collaboratively with other organisations

FESWI continues to work closely with Melbourne Water and many other organisations to conserve the wetland reserves and buffers to the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands and to promote and encourage the protection, rehabilitation and enhancement of the wetland area for the benefit of indigenous flora and fauna. AWARE Wildlife Rescue worked with FESWI on a number of occasions to release wildlife back into their natural habitat. Another interesting collaboration was the Melbourne Water launch of their mobile phone app for their Frog Census Program. Data collected through the program is used to help manage Melbourne's frog populations and raise awareness of waterway health issues. Inez van Polanen

SNIPPETS SNIPPETS SNIPPETS

Grants

Recently, FESWI has been very fortunate in securing two grants. The first was from *the Stronger Communities Programme* of \$7,250 to help towards fixing parts of the bird hide - fascia boards, spouting etc. Many thanks to the Hon Mark Dreyfus QC, MP for his strong support for our application to the *Department of Industry, Innovation and Science*.

The second was from Melbourne Water for \$1,100 to cover the cost of newsletter postage. Thank you, Melbourne Water.

Objection

The application for a proposed development on the boundary of Seaford Wetlands mentioned in the last newsletter, and to which FESWI (and others) objected, has been refused by Frankston Council which is excellent news. The proponents still could, of course, appeal this decision.

Cameras

In the next financial year, Melbourne Water proposes to mount two cameras on top of the Education Centre which will up-load pictures to the Melbourne Water website.

Pest Control

Mosquito monitoring is taking place monthly at Seaford from August into early 2018. Larvacite briquettes are distributed in the wetlands if excessive larvae numbers are present. The briquettes mimic the mosquito juvenile hormone and disrupt the development of larvae and pupae in the water with minimal impact on other fauna. They act for up to 150 days. See Melbourne Water web site. Also, fox control measures will be commencing at Seaford



S & C ELECTRIC COMPANY



Recently, Megan Bockwinkel (Inside Sales Representative) of *S & C Electric Company* got in touch with FESWI with the offer to do some planting at the wetlands, and to make a substantial donation to FESWI. This philanthropic offer (and its accompanying intention to help reduce the company's carbon footprint) underlines *S & C's* strong commitment to social and environmental values. It is a terrific gesture and very much appreciated by FESWI.

Unfortunately, the planting season had finished, but the staff readily agreed to do weeding instead (and to return next year to do some planting). And, on the 10th November, they came out to the Seaford Wetlands to spend the afternoon weeding – a task universally disliked, but they attacked it with energy and gusto!



And as Dr Jill Cainey wrote, "We had an enjoyable afternoon, although I fear our group single-handedly fed the entire mosquito population of the

Seaford Wetlands! I am consoling myself with the thought that fat mozzies, mean fat birds!"



Photo: Richard Sosa

Thank you so much S & C Electric Company!

Thank you, too, volunteers, Inez, Janet, Denise, Lorraine and Arlis for helping out on the day.

AGM PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED

Continued from Page 2

worked with James Frazer from Melbourne Water to promote the app and the Census. Very recently, S & C Electric Company generously donated a little over \$9000 to FESWI to offset their carbon Footprint. Initially, the Committee was a little wary of such a generous offering however the donation is genuine and we are very grateful to S & C. Some of the staff even helped out with some weeding in Seaford last week, what a great crew of people.

Community Grants

FESWI continue to apply for community grants to keep our good work going and were successful in a number of grants from organisations including the Kingston City Council, Frankston City Council and Melbourne Water.

Objections to Council

FESWI continues to lodge objections to planning permit applications where appropriate. I encourage all members to contact a member of the committee if they believe a planning permit application has been lodged that will negatively impact our wetlands of significant importance.

Facebook Page

FESWI launched a Facebook Page in early 2017 and it is fantastic. The effort to maintain this site and to ensure

that the information is relevant and captivating is thanks to Kirsty Costa, Ian Williams and Alison Kuitert. Particular thanks goes to Kirsty who made sure this initiative was launched so professionally.

Rubbish Dumping & Graffiti

Unfortunately, we have reported a number of times this year about the dumping of rubbish and graffiti in our wetland areas. All we can do is continue to try and educate the community and work with local councils to ensure these situations are handles effectively and efficiently.

Celebrations

The FESWI committee love to celebrate with its volunteers.

Christmas 2016

Many of our volunteers enjoyed a Christmas Celebration in the bird hide last December with this year's celebration being held at the Bird Hide from 6pm on Wednesday 6 December 2017.

Extended Hours

On Saturday 12 August 2017 more than 30 bird hide volunteers celebrated the first year anniversary of the reopening of the hide. It was a very enjoyable event with some good food, fun, good company and a short talk by myself to acknowledge how far we have come.

The FESWI Committee thanks whole-heartedly all our members for their continued support.



GUEST SPEAKER

Our guest speaker was Gio Fitzpatrick, who works at the Port Phillip EcoCentre in St Kilda and is convener of the *Friends of Elster Creek*. He gave us a fascinating talk about urban wildlife and the fact that the conservation in urban areas is just as important as the conserving of nature in national parks.

Little parks, street trees and gardens harbour any amount of wildlife and provide precious habitat for many species, particularly birds - seen passing through (where urban parks act as wildlife corridors) or spending their non-breeding time there. He spoke about flock of Red-necked Stints that adapted its behaviour to avoid human disturbance by using small parks at night.



Red-necked Stint. Photo: Neil Fitzgerald

His interest in studying urban environments, is not confined to the wildlife, but people as well because they are part of the ecosystem. It is in these small

pockets of more natural environment where people have their daily interaction with nature and he actively works to promote and facilitate this – for example putting up signs conveying interesting pieces of information along popular walking trails. He also noted that people connect well with water and would like to see

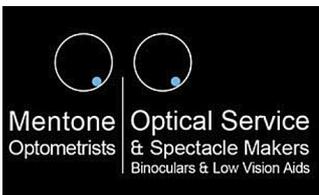
old creek courses un-piped and re-instated. At the end of his talk Gio spoke briefly about his recent trip to Antarctica which could have been a whole talk in itself.

Thank you so much Gio, not just for the talk, but for the great work you are doing.

AT THE HIDE

Binoculars

You may have noticed that the hide now boasts two new pairs of excellent Steiner binoculars. Using a Kingston grant and some of FESWI's money we bought them from *Mentone Optical Services*. This is a family run business since the 1950's and Adam (manager) has given FESWI an excellent deal on them. If you have need of eye testing, glasses or magnifiers you could not go to a better place. Thank you, Adam.



18 Como Parade West
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Deja Vu



Austin (Ozzie) re-attaches the sign dating the timber slice outside the hide, just as he did many years ago when it was first put up.



WATER IN DOWNS

In late October-early November, it was great to see that Melbourne Water started pumping water into the north-eastern corner of the Downs property where it is pooling and starting to follow the old water course across the property.

What was particularly good was the fact that within days, frogs started calling including the Pobblebonk which had not been heard anywhere else around Seaford Wetlands this spring; and within a few weeks, waterbirds were



sighted there including 12 Straw-necked Ibis, six White-faced Herons with young, and Pacific Black Ducks with young. What a great result!

The tall grass on the property has been recently cut back – an excellent job done by Ranger Matt Green and his team (who incidentally have all of the buffer zones around Seaford looking really good).

The birds that appreciate this type of habitat have been spotted there again. Great work!

Longbeach RSL
Tania Ireton
Viridans Pty Ltd

Patterson River Golf Club
Edithvale Family And Children's
Centre

Peninsula Pedallers,
Sonya Kilkenny
Ray White, Chelsea



**Melbourne
Water**

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