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NEWS

LETTER

ISSUE 27 Sep 05 to Feb 07.

Many of you walk our park regularly, perhaps with baby in a pram or the dog on a leash even cycling with the family. If you see anything of interest, please send in a note for our next issue in May.

EDITORIAL.

I can't quite believe it's been more than a year since our last newsletter, you might think that the Friends have not been active. Well that is not so! We have had regular working bees every Month in 2006 and so far this year have already had 5 Bees, in fact we are one of the most active voluntary groups in Cardinia Shire, with over 300 person hours in 2006, almost double our previous years effort.

We do need more members so I have attached an entry form for those of you who can spare a couple of hours of your busy schedule to join us. If you don't have time, you could still support us by becoming a member, or by contributing through the IGA Community Benefits scheme. We spend many \$thousands on Trees, Shrubs and Plants for the enjoyment of all visitors and welcome any contributions to funding.

Much work has been done in the popular areas of our park. Restoring abandoned garden beds, replanting of existing beds, mulching weeding and watering. Its great fun and has its rewards of community achievement and social interaction.



Lakeside Car Park planting.

SHIRE GRANTS

Several of our projects have been supported by Shire grants matched by additional funding and work in kind by the Friends group. Lakeside car park has been enhanced by the planting of Camellias in the restored garden bed along the North bank. These will provide a bit of color and steadily improve the appearance as growth proceeds. Other trees and shrubs were planted in the restored bed just right of the entrance to this car park, the idea is to create a great first impression for visitors entering the park. Both beds have been thoroughly mulched to conserve moisture and further improve appearances. Native vegetation planting in the Messmate area was the result of the previous years Grant and is doing well as are a other natives planted in the Shelter garden.

RECENT WILDLIFE SITINGS

A rather large dark brown wallaby is often seen in the messmate forrest area. It seems to have taken up residence in the area or nearby. Unfortunately the animal may be at risk as a couple of stray dogs have also been seen recently. Would residents please make sure that their dogs are not straying from their properties? It would be nice to see the return of more wild life.

WOOD CHIP SURFACES

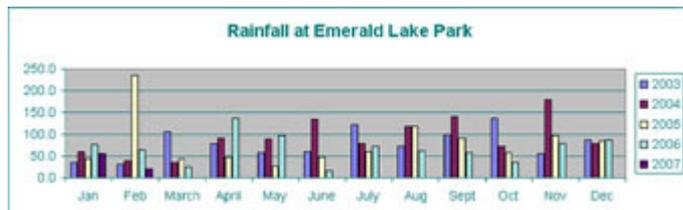
Cuttings from trees and tree removals have provided a large volume of wood chip mulch. Spread by the friends on bare surfaces in the Puffing Billy car park and Messmate areas. It makes for a cleaner surface and reduces erosion when we do get rain. Used as a mulch for plantings of native vegetation and the gardens around the Messmate Shelter again helps with moisture conservation and growth.



Messmate Shelter garden area.

DRY WEATHER DANGER

Watering by bucketing from the lake has been essential to keep the new plantings from dying while they get established. The friends have been busy with this activity esp. through February in the Lakeside car park and the boat shed area. Towards the end of the month park staff have also helped to keep these plants from dying when some became obviously stressed by the very poor rainfall and heat.



RAIN FALL CHART

The chart above shows the comparative rainfall for the last few years. It shows the very poor falls for February totalling 21.7 millimeters following a poor 56.1 millimeters in January.

POOLSIDE HEDGE EXTENSION

The obvious success of the Hebe hedge along the wall at poolside has been considered and this has now been extended right up to the steps at the North West end. We look forward to the growth of this catching up with the remainder of the plants that now dominate the area. Originally the hedge was to obviate the need for a fence to prevent children jumping down off the wall. Growth was a bit slow and so the rustic wooden fence was erected some time ago. The area now looks great esp. when in flower in December as the photo below shows.

Pleasing Result Some results of our planting and care, photo Dec. 06.

FIRE DANGER

Wood chip mulch with the right amount of moisture and bacterial activity can generate a significant amount of internal heat and even catch fire. On several occasions we have observed steam and even smoke coming from the mulch heaps. A neighbor had a fire start in this way and so the risk is not insignificant. If you get mulch delivered don't leave it too long before spreading it or check it often esp. after recent light rain. Never store large heaps of chip mulch in hidden areas or near to material where fire could easily/quickly spread.



WORKING BEES.

Are organized in conjunction with our park officers who cleared and prepared many areas for the replanting of the gardens. The selection of plants for the park are discussed with the group prior to purchase.

THE YEARS BEE EFFORT

So a summary of the years effort:- we have replanted the 5 gardens in the boatshed area. Restored and planted two garden areas in the Lakeside Car Park area. Tidied up along Wattle Creek removing weeds, dead foliage etc. Spread plenty of wood chips and mulched garden beds all round. Many thanks to Cardinia Shire for grants totaling \$2150.00. So that along with grants, FELP funding and Labor in kind a total of \$3,608.77 went into the gardens above. We also purchased tools to the value of \$ 428.00 from FELP funding. A total of 320 person hours for the year, this was an excellent effort. A big thank you to all our dedicated bees for their hard work and consistent support of our park.

NEW YEAR WORKING BEE DATES 2007 - 2hours only.

March 2007.

Saturday 3rd.
Sunday 11th. 9.00am
Thursday 15th. 9.00am

April.

Saturday 7th. 9.00am
Sunday 15th. 9.00am
Thursday 19th. 9.00am

May.

Saturday 5th. 9.00am.
Thursday 17th 9.00am
Sunday 20th. 9.00am

June. 2007.

Saturday 2nd 9.00am
Sunday 10th. 9.00am
Thursday 21th. 9.00pm

July.

Saturday 7th. 9.00am
Sunday 15th. 9.00am
Thursday 19th. 9.00pm

August.

Saturday 4th. 9.00am
Sunday 12th. 9.00am
Thursday 16th. 9.00pm

THE NEXT FELP MEETING.

An informal gathering will be held on the 3rd December at 11.30pm in the Cafe Tea Room when a light lunch will be served!

Friends of Emerald Lake Park Membership Application Form

Name : _____ Fee \$10.00

Address : _____

Phone : _____ Email : _____

Areas of Interest:

Working Bees : _____ Gardening : _____

Council Advisory _____ Promotion : _____

News Letter : _____ Reporter : _____

Editor : _____ Graphic Design : _____

Project Development : _____ Grant Application : _____