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## Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association

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www.iffa.org.au

IFFA's new website

check it out!

# Indigenotes

Vol. 16, No. 2
June 2005

# President's Letter

Well, the first of our new seminar series was carried out last month. Although it was a modest affair the information provided by our speakers was enlightening and for at least some of us a bit disconcerting. The Bush Tender Scheme, the main work of speaker James Todd was perhaps the most encouraging, highlighting how a bit of proper analysis and accountability can really increase “Bang for the Buck” and vastly improve the quality of work and area worked on. Of concern was the detail of the Habitat Hectare program. While it was acknowledged that it is the best we have and is having a positive impact on private land, major concerns still exist. What happens when the floristics of a forest are radically altered during harvesting operations? What about the conversion of native forest to ‘native plantation’? Apparently these are not dealt with under the present guidelines. One hopes that the same level of intellectual rigour applied to the Bush Tender Scheme will be applied to the Habitat Hectare Scheme.

On a more positive note, more seminars, walks and opportunities to exchange ideas and build our knowledge are coming to the fore. Bruce Fuhrer, the author and fungi expert extraordinaire will be investigating the fungi flora of Jumping Creek Reserve at Warrandyte later this month. He has kindly offered to allow all takers to come along. This is a great opportunity to learn about fungi and actually have them identified immediately!!! Bruce will be bringing along copies of his brand new book for those who would like to purchase it. If you haven't seen it you must. Twenty years

of the best fungi photographs anywhere coupled with very informative texts will make this a ‘must have’ text.

Jeff Yugovic, Liz Donohue and a few others are working on a project others might like to be involved in. It involves the field of incorporating local indigenous plants into the gardening repertoire. Both Jeff and Liz have for many years been exploring the practicalities of using local plants in the garden and would like to get the idea as common as the more familiar ‘cottage garden’. Interested in helping? What are your experiences?

Another group is working on the idea that there needs to be some means of accrediting people who work in the bush regeneration/assessment field. The importance of accreditation to the functioning of the Habitat Hectares assessments was a major talking point at our last seminar. How do we achieve accreditation? Who should assess the applicants for accreditation? What skills need to be assessed? If you are interested, let us know, the working group would love to hear from you.

Are you doing something that others might be interested in? Would you consider letting others tag along behind you to learn more? Let us know so that we can advertise it. There is a strong need and interest in the group to gain knowledge. Maybe you can help even if it is just one person who becomes your ‘Ghost’.

- Randall Robinson, President.

## About IFFA

IFFA is the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association and is dedicated to the future of the Australian flora and fauna, whether in habitats of world heritage quality or in the urban back yard.

IFFA's aims and objectives are:

To promote the appreciation, study, conservation and management of indigenous flora and fauna through:

- research and discussion
- networking and advocacy
- and information exchange

*Local plants, local animals, local people and local communities*

## Habitat Assessment Workshop

IFFA's workshop on habitat assessment and Ecological Vegetation Classes was held on Sunday 15 May. James Todd spoke on the Native Vegetation Framework and conservation significance, assessing gains in vegetation and using tools for regulation and assessment.

Pat Vaughan, Environmental Coordinator from the City of Banyule spoke on Banyule's environmental program and in particular how they are mapping and managing their native vegetation.

Cam Beardsell, who undertook the vegetation community/subcommunity mapping for the City of Banyule answered questions about the mapping and its use in prioritizing areas for management.

A summary of the workshop will be available on the website when it has been written.

## Home

IFFA's home page allows anyone access to news, recent Indigenotes, contacts and weblinks and some discussion forums, but the power of the new website is that by registering you can add your own news, favourite links, events and can get involved in online discussion forums.

To register, use the login form on the home page.



If you don't have an account yet, click on "Create one" and you will be asked for your email address. You will be sent an email and when you respond to the email, your account will be activated. When you log in with your new username and password, you get an additional menu which allows much greater participation in the site.

## Your Details

You can change your details here, such as your email address and password.

## Submit News

Got some information to share, add a news item here.

## Submit WebLink

If you've got your own favourites, add them here.

## Events - testing

Add your own events to the calendar.

## News

The news section is where to put shortlived information that's not in the form of an event or a discussion.

## Links

The Links section allows you to browse through weblinks that members have added to the website under a range of headings. Wondered how to find Ecological Vegetation Class benchmarks on the Web? Some of the links are listed later in this newsletter.

## Search

The website is fully searchable, using google technology. So if you aren't sure where you saw something, you can search for it and quickly find it.

## FAQ's

The frequently asked questions part of the website is for information that stays current for longer. You'll find here information about IFFA, and SPIFFAetc.

## Membership

You'll find membership information here, and a downloadable membership form.

## Discussion Forum

This is where you can read, or if you are logged in contribute to discussions about what IFFA does or should do, about habitat corridors, or about whatever you think you'd like to discuss with other members.

## Indigenotes

You can get the latest editions of Indigenotes here, and as time allows, previous editions of Indigenotes will be added.

## Contact Us

Here you'll find contacts for the key people in IFFA, and you can email them from here.

# Web links

IFFA's new website at [iffa.org.au](http://iffa.org.au) includes a weblinks section. Thanks to Linda Bester who provided her favourite environmental web links, many of which are reproduced here, and all of which are on the website, along with others that have been added by users. You can use the links on the website by clicking on them, and if you log onto the website you can submit your own favourite links. The full addresses are of course prefixed by "http://" however for the sake of brevity we show the links without the prefix. In any case many browsers manage without the prefix.

## Awards

Australian Museum Eureka Prizes:

[www.amonline.net.au/eureka/](http://www.amonline.net.au/eureka/)

Nikon-Walkley Awards (Nature photography):

[www.walkleys.com/](http://www.walkleys.com/)

## Book Stores and E-Publications - Environmental:

Andrew Isles: [www.andrewisles.com/AndrewIsles/](http://www.andrewisles.com/AndrewIsles/)

Australian Natural Resources Atlas - Theme Reports:  
[audit.ea.gov.au/ANRA/docs/theme\\_reports.cfm](http://audit.ea.gov.au/ANRA/docs/theme_reports.cfm)

Australian Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment 2002:  
[audit.ea.gov.au/ANRA/vegetation/docs/biodiversity/bio\\_assess\\_contents.cfm](http://audit.ea.gov.au/ANRA/vegetation/docs/biodiversity/bio_assess_contents.cfm)

Dept. of the Environment and Heritage publications:  
[www.deh.gov.au/about/publications/list.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/about/publications/list.html)

DEHeritage biodiversity publications:  
[www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/index.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/index.html)

DSE Bookshop: [www.dse.vic.gov.au/web/root/domino/corporate/bokstore.nsf/pages/books?opendocument](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/web/root/domino/corporate/bokstore.nsf/pages/books?opendocument)

Land For Wildlife Information Notes:  
[www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nreninf.nsf/fid/77D586B2D783E5F7CA256EED001C269E](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nreninf.nsf/fid/77D586B2D783E5F7CA256EED001C269E)

Smiths Bookshop: [smiths.bookshop.co.nz/search.htm](http://smiths.bookshop.co.nz/search.htm)

## Bryophytes

Art and the Bryophyte: [underthesun.anu.edu.au/weblogs/artandthebryophyte/archives/cat\\_bryo\\_gallery.html](http://underthesun.anu.edu.au/weblogs/artandthebryophyte/archives/cat_bryo_gallery.html)

## Conservation Training and Events:

DEH Environmental Events: [www.deh.gov.au/events/](http://www.deh.gov.au/events/)

Earthwatch Expeditions: [www.earthwatch.org/expedselect.html](http://www.earthwatch.org/expedselect.html)

Greening Australia Training Calendar:  
[www.greeningaustralia.org.au/GA/VIC/EandT/](http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/GA/VIC/EandT/)

Greening Australia Events Calendar:  
[www.greeningaustralia.org.au/GA/VIC/HotTopics/calendar.htm](http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/GA/VIC/HotTopics/calendar.htm)

## Chemicals:

Aust. Pesticides & Vet. Medicines Auth. (info on MSDSs & herbicides for particular species):

[www.apvma.gov.au/pubcris/subpage\\_pubcris.shtml](http://www.apvma.gov.au/pubcris/subpage_pubcris.shtml)

Material Safety Data Sheets Australia:

[www.msds.com.au/](http://www.msds.com.au/)

## Conservation Groups and Organisations:

APS District Groups: [home.vicnet.net.au/~sgapvic/groups.htm](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sgapvic/groups.htm)

Envirotalk - Australian Environmental Discussion Forum:  
[www.envirotalk.com.au/forum/index.php?act=home](http://www.envirotalk.com.au/forum/index.php?act=home)

Friends of Water Race & Quinn Reserve (Mt Evelyn):  
[www.mt-evelyn.net/community/waterracequinn.htm](http://www.mt-evelyn.net/community/waterracequinn.htm)

Land For Wildlife: [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dse/nrenpa.nsf/LinkView/34933B99F789EF0E4A25677800115944BA15AEEDADB3CA6C4A2567D600824A6C](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dse/nrenpa.nsf/LinkView/34933B99F789EF0E4A25677800115944BA15AEEDADB3CA6C4A2567D600824A6C)

Ringwood Field Naturalists Club: [home.vicnet.net.au/~rfnc/Meetings/may04oct04.html](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~rfnc/Meetings/may04oct04.html)

Sustainable Gardening Australia (accrediting enviro friendly nurseries): [www.sgaonline.org.au/](http://www.sgaonline.org.au/)

Tasmanian Conservation Trust: [www.tct.org.au/newlet.htm#Tasmanian](http://www.tct.org.au/newlet.htm#Tasmanian)

Victorian Friends Group Network: [home.vicnet.net.au/~friends/](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~friends/)

## Ethical Purchasing:

ECO Buy (ethical purchasing): [www.mav.asn.au/ecobuy](http://www.mav.asn.au/ecobuy)

## Fauna

Amphibian Research Centre: [frogs.org.au/](http://frogs.org.au/)

Australian Wildlife (Everything you need to know about butterflies, mammals, snakes, frogs and lizards):  
[www.museum.vic.gov.au/bioinformatics/](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/bioinformatics/)

- The Victorian Fauna: [www.museum.vic.gov.au/bioinformatics/butter/](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/bioinformatics/butter/)

Australian Lizards - The Victorian Fauna of Lizards, Geckos, Skinks, Dragons, Goannas, Monitors and Legless Lizards (Essential resource):  
[www.museum.vic.gov.au/bioinformatics/lizards/index.htm](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/bioinformatics/lizards/index.htm)

## Framework / Legislative Documents:

EVC Benchmarks: [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dse/nrence.nsf/LinkView/43FE7DF24A1447D9CA256EE6007EA8788062D358172E420C4A256DEA0012F71C](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dse/nrence.nsf/LinkView/43FE7DF24A1447D9CA256EE6007EA8788062D358172E420C4A256DEA0012F71C)

EVC Group Mapping: [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/veg\\_evcNative](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/veg_evcNative)

Vegetation Permit Tracking Website:  
[www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrenlwm.nsf/LinkView/FE1C65591C358CC0CA256EF2001ED7E049A37B2E66E4FD5E4A256DEA00250A3B](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrenlwm.nsf/LinkView/FE1C65591C358CC0CA256EF2001ED7E049A37B2E66E4FD5E4A256DEA00250A3B)

Veg.Qual.Assess.Man.: [www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/nrence.nsf/LinkView/EBF7B20C008E24F5CA256F16001671778062D358172E420C4A256DEA0012F71C](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/nrence.nsf/LinkView/EBF7B20C008E24F5CA256F16001671778062D358172E420C4A256DEA0012F71C)

## Fungi

ANBG Fungi Website: [www.anbg.gov.au/fungi](http://www.anbg.gov.au/fungi)  
Centre for Research in Fungal Diversity: [www.hku.hk/ecology/mycology](http://www.hku.hk/ecology/mycology)

## Government:

Australian, State, Territory and Local Governments: [www.gov.au](http://www.gov.au)  
Banyule Environmental Projects: [www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Content.aspx?TopicID=755&DisplayType=1](http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Content.aspx?TopicID=755&DisplayType=1)  
Dept of Ag. Fisheries and Forestry: [www.affa.gov.au](http://www.affa.gov.au)  
Victorian Local Governments: [www.doi.vic.gov.au/doi/internet/localgov.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/victorian+local+governments](http://www.doi.vic.gov.au/doi/internet/localgov.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/victorian+local+governments)  
Victorian Ombudsman: [www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)

## Grants:

Envirofund Grants: [www.nht.gov.au/envirofund](http://www.nht.gov.au/envirofund)  
Grantslink: [www.grantslink.gov.au](http://www.grantslink.gov.au)  
Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA): Calendar of Grants and Incentives [www.ppwcma.vic.gov.au/GrantsCalendar\(27-10-04\).pdf](http://www.ppwcma.vic.gov.au/GrantsCalendar(27-10-04).pdf)

## Job Websites - Environmental

Environmental Jobs Network: [www.environmentaljobs.com.au](http://www.environmentaljobs.com.au)  
NRM Jobs: [www.nrmjobs.com.au/search.htm](http://www.nrmjobs.com.au/search.htm)

## Legislation Information - Environmental:

Conservation Evidence: [www.conservationevidence.com](http://www.conservationevidence.com)  
EPBC Act: [www.deh.gov.au/epbc](http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc)  
Planning Schemes Online: [www.dse.vic.gov.au/planningschemes](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/planningschemes)  
VCAT: Victorian Local Governments: [www.vcat.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au)

## Management Plans and Env. Reports:

Bass Strait Nature Reserves Management Plan (Draft) [members.iinet.net.au/~lford1/bassman.htm](http://members.iinet.net.au/~lford1/bassman.htm)  
Frankston City Vegetation Study: [www.frankston.vic.gov.au/upload/documents/VegStudy.PDF](http://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/upload/documents/VegStudy.PDF)  
Parks Victoria Management Plans & Strategies: [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1process.cfm?publication=7](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1process.cfm?publication=7)

## Natural Resource Information - General:

Australian Local Government Association: [www.alga.net.au/policy/environment/resourceManagement.php](http://www.alga.net.au/policy/environment/resourceManagement.php)  
DPI Victorian Natural Resources: [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/sitemap](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/sitemap)

## Newsletters - Environmental:

EcoVoice: [www.ecovoice.com.au](http://www.ecovoice.com.au)

Whittlesea Environews: [www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cid=440&tid=440&tpid=377&sid=&spid=&cnid=1003](http://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cid=440&tid=440&tpid=377&sid=&spid=&cnid=1003)

## Plant Information:

ABRS Flora Online: [www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/abrs/online-resources/flora/index.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/abrs/online-resources/flora/index.html)  
Advisory List of Rare Or Threatened Plants In Victoria ? 2005: [www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/nrenpa.nsf/LinkView/996B0477753A4204CA256DD4007F1CA528E305DE442CAC684A256DEA0024ACF6](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/nrenpa.nsf/LinkView/996B0477753A4204CA256DD4007F1CA528E305DE442CAC684A256DEA0024ACF6)  
Australian Botany Pages: <http://www.anbg.gov.au>  
Australian on-line threatened species database: [www.deh.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl](http://www.deh.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl)  
Australian Type Specimen Photograph database: [plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/HISCOM/TypePhoto/](http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/HISCOM/TypePhoto/)  
Directory of Australian Botanic Gardens and Arboreta: [www.anbg.gov.au/chabg/bg-dir/](http://www.anbg.gov.au/chabg/bg-dir/)  
Orchid Image Bank (Australasian Species): [www.nor.com.au/users/kreation/lmajbank.htm](http://www.nor.com.au/users/kreation/lmajbank.htm)  
PlantNET (Plant Info Network System): [plantnet.rbgsyd.gov.au](http://plantnet.rbgsyd.gov.au)  
Plants of Hawaii: [www.hear.org/starr/hiplants/images/index.html](http://www.hear.org/starr/hiplants/images/index.html)  
Royal Botanic Gardens Plant Science Info: [www.rbgs.vic.gov.au/plant\\_science](http://www.rbgs.vic.gov.au/plant_science)  
Threatened Species List (TAS) - Vascular Plants: [www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/SLEN-5P27QC?open#A](http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/SLEN-5P27QC?open#A)  
Threatened Species websites Australia-wide: [www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened](http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened)

## Grassroots funding

A new partnership has been established between Landcare Australia and VicTrack. VicTrack owns and manages Victoria's rail and communications easements. Landcare and other community environmental groups and networks across Victoria can apply for funds for projects devoted to any aspect of grassland management on Victrack land.

Recognising that Victoria's rarest ecosystems are its grasslands, and that many remnants are along railway lines, VicTrack wants to promote a wider public understanding and involvement in their management anywhere throughout the state, not just on VicTrack land.

To initiate further community partnerships it has teamed with Landcare Australia to run the Grassroots program. Up to \$80,000 is available for grants in 2005.

**Applications close Friday 8 July 2005**

*more info at [www.iffa.org.au](http://www.iffa.org.au)*

# Ringling the Bluebells

The Bluebell Family (*Campanulaceae*) rings out a series of interesting opportunities for producing landscape melodies. The family name *Campanulaceae* is derived from the Latin word for bell as seen in the word for bell-ringing *campanologist*. This plant family versatility ranges from insignificant ground covers spreading like blue mats across rockery displays to bold blue spikes acting as colourful framework in herbaceous spring borders. Popular amongst the *Campanula* species are the 'Canterbury Bells' (*C. media*) exhibiting showy spikes of cup and saucer shaped flowers. Their name 'Canterbury Bells' honours St. Thomas a Becket, as a result of the flower's similarity to the bells hanging from the horses' necks which drew the pilgrims' carts on their long sojourns to worship at his shrine. Some *Campanula* species are edible producing tasty swollen roots, while others such as *C. rapunculus* are grown for blanching as a celery substitute or boiling for their asparagus-like shoots.

Besides the much-loved varieties, there are also many poorly known family members. These include the dainty native woodland Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia* sp.), the distinctive, much-prized exotic Lobelias (eg Red Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*), the native Lobelias, (eg The Poison Lobelia *L. pratoides* 'Angled Lobelia' *L. alata*), as well as the unusual bulbous Balloon Flower (*Platycodon grandiflorus*).

The delicate bellflowers of the native *Wahlenbergia* species are commonly seen in summer as blue splashes within our grassy woodland. They flourish in the inter-tussock spaces amongst the native grasses and sedges providing tiny nectar pools for a variety of moths, butterflies, bees and ground feeding birds. [In the Hobart area] they include the graceful 'Annual Bluebell' *W. gracilentia*, the blue flowering 'Sprawling Bluebell' *W. gracilis* and the larger, funnel flowers displayed by the 'Naked Bluebell' and 'Tall Bluebell', (*W. gymnoclada* and *W. stricta*).

All these species adapt to the protective care of a back yard native grass landscape, rewarding the grower with blue flowers for long periods. By late summer they die back to an undergrown rootstock, happily reappearing as young green shoots in late winter. An unexpected bonus is that their tasty petals add interest to any garden salad. They are easy to grow. Simply collect the seeds and store them in the refrigerator for 3 months prior to sowing.

The *Lobelia* genus is a fascinating family member represented by both native and exotic favourites. The distinctive and much-prized exotic *Lobelia cardinalis* and *L. siphilitica* were named the 'Red and Blue Cardinal Flowers'. Their stocking-like flower shapes were seen as closely resembling the stockings worn by the Cardinal during the reign of Charles 1<sup>st</sup>. Their flowers typically form bold red or blue spikes, which will be a focus in any herbaceous border. Their roots have a cultural importance for the American

Indians being sort after as a powerful tonic. Amongst the Lobelias, the spectrum of blue shades and tolerant easy care nature makes *L. erinus* still one of the biggest selling bedding plants on the market. Its ability to enhance hanging baskets by forming weeping cascades of blue over their sides has continued to regular usage.

Our native Lobelias also have a variety of attractive flowering forms, ideal for rockeries and moister parts of the native garden. Examples include the pale blue fan-shaped flowering Angled Lobelia, *L. alata* the deep blue tubular flowering Tall Lobelia, *L. gibbosa* and the tufted, white throated, dark blue to light purple-blue flowering Tufted Lobelia *L. rhombifolia*. These Lobelias contain an alkaloid 'Lobeline' traditionally used by herbalists as a relaxant. Given that it may detrimentally interfere with the nervous system, care is recommended. Recently, scientifically controlled doses administered by surgeons, are providing a favoured means to dilate patient's airways during operations.

Unknown to most gardeners are a few delicate creeping native herbs that a worthy of introducing into moister sections of your native garden. The Tassie natives, Swamp Isotone (*Isotone fluviatilis*), along with Matted and Poison Pratia (*P. pedunculata* and *P. irrigua*) enjoy swampy conditions or fringes of water ponds. They form trailing mats of soft blue, star-like tubular flowers. Their quick to root, long spreading runners enable them to act as soil binding erosion controllers or grass alternatives in low traffic areas.

In conclusion, apply this new Bluebell Family knowledge at your next opportunity by selecting from the families plant palate and be rewarded with a few new melodies of colour amongst your home landscape.

PHIL WATSON

BLUEBELLS ARE WATER FRIENDLY NATIVE HERBS



# FUNGAL FORAY

## Jumping Creek Reserve

Warrandyte State Park



### Bruce Fuhrer

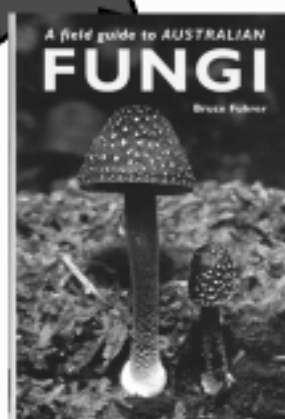
*Come for a walk with one of Australia's most knowledgeable mycologists and see what beautiful and interesting specimens are out this time of the year.*



# EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!

## Saturday 18th June 2005

**NEW**



Meet 10:30 am in the car park of  
**JUMPING CREEK RESERVE**  
**Warrandyte State Park**  
**(MelRef 24 A9)**

*Bruce will bring along copies of his brand new book 'A Field Guide to Australian Fungi', for anyone who is interested in purchasing it.*

The book incorporates decades of research, aiming to identify approximately 500 species in the field with Bruce's magnificent Photography. It is the most comprehensive pictorial field guide on Australian fungi currently available.



For further information, please call **IFFA**  
(Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association)

**(03) 9386 0264**

Website: <http://www.iffa.org.au>

## Issues:

# Port Phillip Bay Shipping Channel proposal: Channel deepening issues associated with the 'Northern Works'

The issues involved in the overall Channel Deepening are far too many to address in a short article. This paper only discusses issues in the northern end of the bay, considered to pose a serious risk for the Bay's food chain. Icon species such as dolphins and penguins ultimately rely on successful breeding of smaller species to survive. For example, a crash in the Southern anchovy population would be disastrous for the St Kilda penguin colony and have serious implications for the significant proportion of the Phillip Island penguins that overwinter in PPB.

In summary, the central issues associated with the 'northern works' are:

1. Primary production (the basis of the marine food chain) requires sufficient light to penetrate the water column. The combination of dredge impacts and natural background levels of turbidity and nutrient influx in the Yarra River and Hobsons Bay during spring and summer represents a high risk to production. This ultimately translates to reduced breeding success of fishes and seabirds.

2. Toxic materials have accumulated in the Yarra sediments over the past 150 years from the urban and agricultural catchment. Dredging contaminated sediments from the Yarra and Hobsons Bay will remobilise toxins to the water column and impact on fish and other marine life. Disposing these sediments in the bay will result in their longer-term dispersal across the wider bay area.

3. Dredging in the Yarra River and Hobsons Bay during spring and summer over two consecutive years will significantly reduce spawning success of Southern anchovies, a species that is of critical importance to the higher food chain; and black bream, an important species for the recreational fishery. The dredge plume may also impact on snapper spawning along the north-eastern coast of the bay.

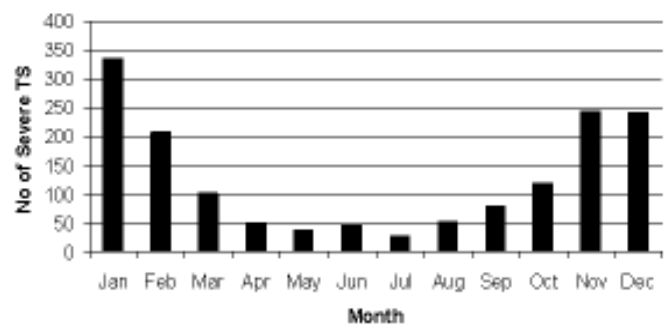
### Rainfall events and increased nutrient input from the Yarra River

'Heavy rainfall events' in Melbourne occur predominantly in spring-summer. They translate as 'increased nutrients' flushed to the Yarra from the wider catchment. **Excessive nutrient loads** combine with seasonal **greater average hours of sunlight** to cause algal blooms that de-oxygenate the water leading to dieback of organisms. *Note: The EES Water quality and*

*sediment transport modelling did not include freshwater pulses associated with thunderstorms.*

The following table (source: Bureau of Meteorology) shows heavy rainfall events in Melbourne predominantly occur in spring and summer. 'Increased rainfall' can be taken to roughly translate as 'increased nutrients' as heavy rain events flush nutrients from the wider catchment into the bay.

Monthly distribution of Severe Thunderstorm events in Victoria (1861-2003)



**Impacts of increased turbidity (murkiness of the water):** During Yarra flood events the freshwater plume extends well into Hobsons Bay, occasionally as far south as Beaumauris. Freshwater overlies seawater until currents and wave action cause the two layers to mix. Fine 'mud' particles and nutrients remain in the freshwater plume until mixing with the seawater layer and eventually settling.

Increased turbidity due to dredging will reduce light reaching the bottom and therefore limit microphytobenthos growth; with consequences for organisms higher up the food chain. Microphytobenthos in this area play an important role in processing nutrients in the bay. Ability of predators to see their prey will also be reduced. Breeding colonies of seabirds which feed in the bay include Australasian Gannets, Pied Cormorants, Crested Terns, and Little Penguins.

**Resuspension of nutrients:** Dredging releases 'pore water' held within the sediment. Pore water typically contains higher levels of nutrients than in the water column above. Pore water from Hobsons Bay has substantially higher nutrient concentrations than all other areas studied in PPB. Released 'pore water'

nutrients that were previously unavailable to plants, add to the nutrient loads already existing in the water column.

**Increased nutrient loading:** Nitrogen in the water column is derived mainly from organic (ie plankton and dead material) and particulate forms, but also from oxidised N and ammonium. The former are higher in northern PPB where algal blooms are more common. The latter are highest around the major inputs of the Western Treatment Plant and the Yarra River.

**Reduced nutrient assimilation:** Microphytobenthos (single-celled algae on the seabed) play a key role in nutrient cycling. Loss of microphytobenthos and reduced photosynthesis may therefore have a significant impact on denitrification efficiency in the Bay.

**Mobilisation of toxic algal cysts:** EPA 'Guidelines' state "If possible, dredging in Hobsons Bay should avoid December to mid April when *Alexandrium catanella* blooms are most likely". Remobilisation of cysts may result in blooms of toxic algal species *Alexandrium catanella* and *A. tamarense*, that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning, and are potentially fatal in humans.

**Seasonally vulnerable fish spawning** in Northern PPB during spring and summer include:

- Snapper breed on reefs between St Kilda and Ricketts Point between Nov - March.
- Black bream spawn in the Yarra estuary from October to December.
- Southern anchovies spawn October to March.

At least two Expert Witnesses engaged by the Port of Melbourne Corporation have acknowledged that the impact of dredging on the Southern anchovy spawning season is uncertain. The reliance on anchovies as prey for penguins, other seabirds, larger fishes, and dolphins has become critical since the pilchard population crashed in the 1990s.

**Note: 'Irreversible Damage' to a species** is most likely to occur when all ages (adults, eggs, larvae, and juveniles) are concentrated within a restricted geographic area. Destruction of habitat at this time can cause the death of a significant sample of the population resulting in overall loss of genetic stock available to future generations.

## PORT PHILLIP BAY FOOD CHAIN

Werribee Sewerage Farm and the Yarra are the major sources of nutrient to the bay. Plants (primary pro-

ducers) use nutrients and sunlight to produce organic material. Consumer organisms feed on the plants or on other animals and in this way energy and nutrients are passed along the wider bay food chain.

**Primary producers (plants)** Plants (primary producer organisms) are at the base of any food chain as they are eaten by animals (consumer organisms).

In the marine environment, the phytoplankton (free-floating microscopic plants) and microphytobenthos (microscopic plants anchored to the seabed) are grazed on by a range of zooplankton (animals) that are ultimately eaten by larger animals. In northern PPB there are also larger plants such as seagrasses and seaweeds. The growth and productivity of all these plants is predominantly influenced by water temperature, light availability and nutrient levels.

### Southern Anchovy: where do they fit in?

**Southern Anchovy (*Engraulis australis*)** spawning occurs at the northern end of PPB from October to April and usually peaks in January. Adult anchovies feed primarily on zooplankton.

**Commercial Catch (humans):** In Victoria, PPB is the most important commercial fishery for anchovy. Commercial catches have traditionally been greatest along eastern PPB (Blackburn 1950a). During 1998-2001, the largest commercial catch of southern anchovy was taken from an area just west of the Port Melbourne Channel between Altona and Williamstown (Fisheries Victoria 2001).

**PPB breeding seabird colonies:** The following seabirds breed within PPB:

White-faced Storm-petrels:	from Sept to March.
Australasian Gannets:	from July to mid April.
Crested Terns:	from Oct to Jan.
Little Penguins:	from July to March.
Pied Cormorants:	from Feb to Sept-Oct

Except for Pied Cormorants, seabird breeding in PPB occurs mostly in spring-summer. Again, with the exception of Pied Cormorants, these seabirds feed primarily on schooling fish species such as pilchards and anchovies. In 2004 the St Kilda penguin colony has been found to rely almost exclusively on southern anchovies. *Note: Penguins from the Phillip Island colony are also known to over-winter in PPB where adequate fish stocks enable them to attain breeding condition. A serious decline of anchovy stocks would clearly impact on these birds.*

From Neil Blake, Coordinator, Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc Ph 9534 0413

People can keep up with the campaign at [www.bluwedges.org](http://www.bluwedges.org)

## Review

# Indigenous: the making of my native garden

By Don Burke, Published by Allen & Unwin, Sydney 2004

### Reviewed by Ken Duxbury

Whilst walking through a Carlton bookshop recently my eyes were drawn to the spine of a book which bore the inscription “*Indigenous* Don Burke”. When I got home I typed the words “indigenous don burke” into the Google search engine, and found the Burke’s Backyard website. It contains the following information about Don Burke’s book:

“*Indigenous*: Don’s new book *Indigenous*, is the story of his own garden. It describes how he transformed a bush block with virtually no soil into a family retreat with a lush, native garden that looks as if it’s been there forever. As the story of the garden unfolds, Don also includes some details of the development of the Burke’s Backyard television program.... *Indigenous* is a testament to Don’s commitment to educating gardeners everywhere about Australian native plants.”

The book was not at all what I expected: some sections of the book were surprisingly enlightened, showing a real interest in, and even a passion for, locally indigenous plants. Unfortunately however, other sections of the book are especially from an indigenous flora and fauna, and environmental sustainability perspective very bad indeed ...

### THE EARLY DAYS

The first three chapters of *Indigenous* trace the early history of the Garden, and are by far the best and most interesting section of the book.

They describe how the two hectare property was purchased by Don Burke and his wife in 1984. The site, located on the fringes of Sydney, was not exactly a bush block: most of the land had been cleared. There were however some fine Scribbly Gums (*Eucalyptus haemostoma*) on the site, and some remnant understorey areas which were heavily weed-infested, especially where added nutrients were disgorged by a septic tank outflow.

The garden created by Don Burke could be accurately described as at least a predominantly local indigenous garden:

“During the hard times when we were simultaneously establishing our TV show and beginning work on the property [...] I had collected and grown seed from many local plants: several species of gum trees, angophoras, she-oaks etc. Ray Brown, my mate the plant propagator, had struck cuttings of obscure natives such as *Platysace*

*lanceolata*, *Grevillea mycronulata* (local form), *phebaliums* and much more.

Another mate and owner of a local seed company, Ray Petrie, also supplied us with seed from a number of local natives. I decided to grow a truly indigenous (local) native garden, but as the garden nearest the house I enriched it with natives from other parts of Australia.”

It is clear from this that Don Burke understood the distinction between locally indigenous and other native plants, including the distinction between local and non-local forms of the same species, and that he was prepared to go to the trouble of specially propagating local species from local seed sources, at a time (mid 1980’s) when indigenous nurseries were only just starting to be established. Don Burke could, in fact, be considered as an important Indigenous Garden pioneer.

### THE MAIN PLANTINGS

After a chapter devoted to the construction of driveways and dream home, the book goes on to describe “The Main Plantings” (Chapter 5). The opening of this chapter came as so much of a surprise to me: Don champions the idea of a lush green lawn as an essential and indispensable component of an indigenous or “bush” garden, contrary to the stated intention of the book which promises to “show you a sensible way to design your native gardens – a garden which will require no maintenance ...no weeding ...no lawnmowing”

Burke goes on to describe the – generally non locally indigenous – plantings carried out in the areas of his garden adjacent to his house. This included a wide range of species, including tree ferns, cordylines, kangaroo paws, and a large number of species of bird attracting shrubs – chosen so as to provide year-round flowers – and nectar. These species include callistemons, banksias, and – especially grevilleas.

The idea of using non-local native plants (including cultivars) close to the house, and a locally indigenous species in more “remote” areas is in accordance with widely accepted landscape design principles and practice, and can often lead to the development of gardens which are both attractive and ecologically sound.

However, it is important to ensure that the non-local plants chosen do not have the potential to become invasive environmental weeds and / or to hybridise with locally indigenous plants. These issues are not discussed in Burke's book or, as far as I know, on his website.

## THE GOOD LIFE AND WILDLIFE

In chapter 6, Burke describes the construction of ponds, dams and, in particular, a dramatic waterfall – requiring the shifting of massive sandstone boulders and complex feats of hydraulic engineering. The end result looks like a cross between Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water and a Smorgie's restaurant.

Chapter 7, entitled 'The Good Life and Wildlife' describes some of the many birds – especially honeyeaters and parrots – that are attracted to Don Burke's garden throughout the year by the never-ending succession of grevilleas and other native shrubs. There is a photograph of Don Burke with Vic, his pet red-tailed black cockatoo – "he could fly away but he chooses not to" – perched on his shoulder. Burke goes on to provide some details of the natural habitat of red-tailed black cockatoos in the Northern Territory.

"They nest in hollows in old trees, mostly on private property. Because the cockies have no monetary value farmers are forced to clear the breeding areas of farming land where they graze cattle or grow rice etc. If the farmers could harvest, say, half the black cocky babies from their nests, then they could earn a living and justify not clearing their land. The cockies go on forever and so do we".

I find this section particularly disturbing, especially in that appears to suggest that landowners are compelled to use the whole of their land in such a way as to maximize financial returns, regardless of the environmental consequences and that maintaining wildlife habitat areas can only be justified when wildlife can be "harvested" and sold.

Much of the environmental advice included in the Environmental Guide is soundly based for example "Where possible grow species that are local (indigenous) to the area" (although there is no mention of the importance of local provenances) and the benefits

of creating a frog-friendly garden.

However, some other advice is dubious to say the least. For example, the suggestion that "there is no environmental reason to recycle plastics. The fuel and energy used collecting and transporting plastics for recycling may actually be detrimental to the environment". Even a quick Google search would demonstrate that this is simply not true.

## FOLLOWING DON'S EXAMPLE?

After describing the wide range of birds and other wildlife which visit his Garden (even including the occasional wallaby, echidna and goanna) Don Burke suggests that other gardeners follow his example, by planting at least some locally indigenous plants to attract wildlife to their gardens (p116).

"And be very clear on this: doing this sort of thing will help Australia and its environment more than recycling, saving domestic water use, keeping worm farms and avoiding plastic shopping bags and all the other trendy activities. I really believe that I am making a difference. You can too."

Don Burke's lack of concern for minimising domestic water use might help to explain why he does not seem to be aware of, or care about, the environmental and sustainability issues relating to his desire for, and advocacy of ponds, waterfalls, and a lush emerald green lawn; or, just perhaps, his belief that lawns and water features are genetically programmed necessities has somehow blinded him to the urgent need for residents of Sydney and throughout Australia, to limit water consumption and create water efficient gardens.

The book left me sad and angry, and wondering how, after such a promising start in the mid 1980's, it all went so horribly, horribly wrong.

**This is an edited version of Ken's review, a full version with considerably more information can be found at [iffa.org.au](http://iffa.org.au)**

## IFFA activities:

### **Fungal Foray Saturday 18 June**

Come for a walk with one of Australia's most knowledgeable mycologists (Bruce Fuhrer) and see what beautiful and interesting specimens are out this time of the year. Everyone is welcome. Saturday 18th June 2005. Meet 10:30 am in the car park of Jumping Creek Reserve, Warrandyte State Park (Mel ref 24 A9). Enquiries (03) 93860264. See page 7.



## **Membership**

IFFA membership costs  
\$40 for non-profit organizations,  
\$50 for corporations,  
\$25 for individuals and families,  
or \$20 concession.

### **Membership includes**

**4 issues of *Indigenotes* per year, enhanced access to IFFA's website at [iffa.org.au](http://iffa.org.au) and discount subscription to *Ecological Management & Restoration Journal***

*Members should check the mailing label to ascertain the status of their membership. If an invoice is required, please send a purchase order requesting an invoice.*

*Membership applications and renewals should be sent to the membership secretary. A receipt will be attached to the front page of the next issue mailed.*

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### **COMING ARTICLES:**

Kidznotes - a kids page in *Indigenotes*  
Superb Fairy-wren Coastal Survey  
Review: Wildflowers of the North Coast of NSW.  
Review: Fungi Down Under - the Fungimap guide to Australian fungi

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Contributions to *Indigenotes* should be sent to the editor — the deadline for the next issue is 12th July 2005. Contributions must be in electronic form, either on PC formatted floppy disk or CD or can be sent to the editor by email.

*The views expressed in *Indigenotes* are not necessarily those of the Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association.*