

# CRISP News

Coming to you from your neighbourhood nursery  
the Community of Ringwood Indigenous Species Plant nursery

17 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood 3134  
Telephone 9879 3911 Fax 9879 1161

*A community group of volunteers dedicated to saving and  
sustaining the indigenous plants of our local environment*

SPRING 2002



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| Summer closing of Sunday Sales  |                          |    |
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## WHAT'S AVAILABLE AT THE NURSERY

Over 75 Species of Indigenous Plants  
Propagated from Local Sources

\*trees \*shrubs \*wildflowers \*grasses \*ground covers \*water plants \*& more!

|        |             |   |
|--------|-------------|---|
| PRICES | Members     | 80c for tubes<br>\$2.60 for 150mm pots  |
|        | Non-members | \$1.10 for tubes<br>3.00 for 150mm pots |

And a comprehensive range of informative leaflets

|                        |            |                |
|------------------------|------------|----------------|
| OUR SALES AREA IS OPEN | WEDNESDAYS | 9.30am - 12.30 |
|                        | FRIDAYS    | 9.30am - 12.30 |
|                        | SUNDAYS *  | 1.00pm - 3.00  |

\* Sunday Sales will discontinue over the Summer period - Dec.Jan.Feb.  
when it would be inadvisable to plant in view of prevailing drought conditions  
Re-opening this service - 1st March, 2003. (Remaining open Wed. & Fri.)

### INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS

*We invite you to Join us for a WORKING BEE at the Nursery  
SATURDAY 9th NOVEMBER 10am-2pm  
Refreshments - tea, coffee, cordial  
And Barbeque Lunch provided*

C.R.I.S.P. MANAGEMENT TEAM FOR 2002/3

#### COMMITTEE

|                       |                        |                |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Olwen Jones           | - President            | Paul Chenery   |
| Carmel Koesasi        | - Vice President       | Joyce Jones    |
| Annette O'Sullivan    | - Nursery Co-ordinator | Stephanie Carr |
| Pam Catling           | - Treasurer            | Greg Jacobs    |
| Marian Aiken-Petersen | - Secretary            |                |

NURSERY MANAGER Jo Middlehurst  
NURSERY HAND Bill Hermon

**\* FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

It is now almost six years since I first became aware of the CRISP Nursery, through a photo and small article in one of the local papers. Having been looking for something else to do in retirement, working with plants certainly struck a chord.

Things have certainly changed and developed over the years, and with Dale Morgan's resignation, we now look to the future with new Nursery Manager, Jo Middlehurst. Jo is young, she is studying for a diploma in Natural Resources' Management at Swinburne, and also has considerable experience in the work that we do at the Nursery. On behalf of our new committee and everyone at CRISP, I wish her well and, with her main assistant, Nursery Co-ordinator, Annette O'Sullivan, we are looking forward to continuing progress at the Nursery.

Olwen Jones

I am really enjoying my new position with all its challenges. I want to say a HUGE thank-you to Annette, Bill and Dale for all their help, support and guidance. It is very much appreciated!

Jo Middlehurst

**\* REPORT ON A.G.M.**

*Held at the Federation Estate on the evening of 6th September, our second Annual General Meeting at this address attracted an enthusiastic gathering of members. Following the formal acceptance of nominations for the 2002/3 Committee of Management, our Guest Speaker, Ken McInnes, provided a fascinating insight into the origin and subsequent development of CRISP Nursery.*

*We feel all members would be interested in this history, and hope to publish in some detail Ken's address in our next Newsletter.*

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**OUR SUNDAY SALES EFFORT**

In April CRISP began a somewhat tentative opening of our Sales Area for two hours each Sunday. The success of this venture depended not only on the support of members and on widening our 'appeal' to the general community, but also, and significantly, on volunteers willing to take on this added responsibility.

Our confidence in the support of our long-term Friday volunteers was not mis-placed.

It is they who accepted the challenge, and it is they who must be congratulated on the outstanding success of this venture.

\*\*\*\*\*

## AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY - Victoria

On the 29th-30th June, Maroondah members were hosts for this well-known organisation's twice yearly week-end gathering.

The theme of 'Designing with Indigenous Plants' admirably suited the participation of CRISP Nursery. Long-time members of the Society, and also, long-time volunteers at CRISP, Lola and Charlie Mensch, hosted the special Saturday afternoon opening - which resulted in a large financial boost to CRISP coffers!

The Society's quarterly journal, September 2002, recorded:

"After tea it was back towards the hall and a visit to CRISP Nursery in Greenwood Ave., Ringwood. Several members of Maroondah Group join the volunteers that do much of the work at the community nursery, growing and selling plants indigenous to the Ringwood area, and they should be congratulated on the fantastic range of plants that were on offer. I think nearly everyone walked away with a purchase of some sort and I was pleased to find local pea plants I had been keeping an eye out for."

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***'SENSE OF PLACE' EXHIBITION***

At the Gallery, Federation Estate, mid-year, the Learning Together Group put on a wonderful exhibition of Aboriginal Art together with community input into the process of reconciliation.

C.R.I.S.P participated with a display of local indigenous plants illustrating their many uses: edible berries and nectar from flowers, use of flax leaves for weaving, the bark from eucalypts and medicinal oils from the tee tree. Adding another dimension to the display was the wonderful aroma from cassinia, prostanthera and eucalyptus.

Many thanks to the gallery staff in facilitating the smooth running of the presentation with the associated difficulties arising from a long-term display of live plants.

Annette O'Sullivan

### **ANYONE INTERESTED IN SEED COLLECTING ?**

**This activity takes place in December & January  
If interested in being involved, please notify the nursery and indicate whether  
you are available on a week-day or week-end**

DISCLAIMER The articles contained in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by C.R.I.S.P. Nursery Inc., its staff, members or volunteers, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the organisation. This publication merely seeks to share information with those interested in the conservation of our local flora and related environmental issues

## PLANT RESCUE WORK

Early spring, Ken McInnes, Jo Middlehurst and myself, together with Frank Kauhaussen from Vic Roads, staked out, mapped and photographed a patch of greenhood orchids at the Eastern Freeway site. Only showing their heads at springtime, it was important to register their exact position for a future plant rescue.

CRISP already has much rescue material from this site. Cuttings and seed from this are being propagated so that the diversity can be maintained when plants are re-introduced. The rescued grass trees have decided to send up flower spikes! Hopefully they will produce seed. We already have a few boxes of bird orchids and these, along with the other plants, will be going back into this area when appropriate.

Annette O'Sullivan

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## ANNUAL OPEN GARDEN EVENT

*Following an inaugural Open Garden event last year, fellow Crispian volunteer, Brenda Moore, and husband, Tony, invited members to view their Park Orchards garden in August.*

*Their home, built high on a steep slope, takes maximum advantage of the valley vista. At the back, beneath the changing shadows of eucalypts, meandering pathways led one amongst a vast variety of flourishing Australian native plants amidst a seemingly never-ending twittering of local birdlife attracted to the garden. Every so often one came across a charming pond nestling beside the path.*

*To the front, Brenda and Tony have recently concentrated on the planting of indigenous varieties around a larger pond, beside which a strategically placed garden seat seemed to foretell of a future of relaxed contemplation in a garden that has involved much hard but rewarding work.*

*Our heartfelt thanks to Brenda and Tony for enabling this important CRISP event to continue.*

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### CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS

We would love more help in the nursery on Wednesday mornings  
-- no experience is needed, just a sense of humour and enjoyment of plants --

Would any Member be free for 2 hours weekly to keep our files in order !!

\* **THE WIDER VISION - INTERNATIONAL**

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*From a small valley of death to a lush green oasis,  
Proof that anything is possible ... !*

Earlier in the year the Nursery was approached by World Vision Australia to supply (at a cut rate) 350 tubes for a fund raising venture at Northland Shopping Centre. The tubes were to be given in exchange for a donation to World Vision's re-forestation project in the Ansolia Valley, Ethiopia. During the 1980's a combination of drought, war and over population had reduced the valley to a dust bowl of unimaginable misery. Now, a decade later, the people are self-reliant and the valley lush and fertile once more - an oasis in an otherwise ravaged landscape, still denuded and arid.

This transformation was achieved, in part, by the establishment of a community nursery that propagates over 30 different tree species. Whilst most of the plants propagated are fruit bearing varieties, fast growing Australian species (casuarinas, acacias, eucalypts, silky oaks) have proved an invaluable resource. They provide much needed fuel and fodder and help combat soil erosion by contributing to soil stabilisation and enrichment. Each year one and a half million seedlings are raised! Then 150 seedlings per family are distributed for planting and on going cultivation. In the decade since 1990 over TEN MILLION TREES have been planted.

World Vision has begun work on restoring another valley in Ethiopia believing that these projects not only benefit the people concerned but, ultimately, improve the environmental health of the entire planet. CRISP was happy to be associated with such a project and we are considering a formal ongoing association with an environmental project somewhere in the third world, perhaps East Timor! If you have any ideas just contact

The Editor, Crisp News, C/ CRISP Nursery

Carmel Koesasi

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* **THE WIDER VISION - NATIONAL**

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**Birds Australia**

Over the past four years, Birds Australia has co-ordinated the Atlas of Australian Birds. Over 7,000 volunteers Australia-wide contributed more than 250,000 surveys to the project. The Atlas data is already enabling a better understanding of our wild birds and protection of their habitats. CRISP has again contributed \$50 to Birds Australia in their need for ongoing monitoring and further analysis of this data base.

\* We would encourage a visit to Birds Australia's exciting retail outlet - 415 Riversdale Road  
Hawthorn East, 3123

*Australian Bush Heritage Fund*

*Evidence that it is small groups like ours who are making a difference on the national level*

Continuing its aim of becoming the owner and guardian of the most outstanding natural ecosystems in Australia, the Australian Bush Heritage Fund recently purchased the biodiversity *Hot Spot* in south Western Australia, now re-named Chereninup Creek Reserve. CRISP was among the many contributors towards this purchase.

Chereninup Creek Reserve now enters the next phase - preparation of the management plan. This means more research, more information to gather from maps, satellite images and fire histories, as well as the daily work of controlling weeds, erosion, feral animals, and of monitoring the populations of both rare and common flora and fauna species. Towards this work CRISP, in June, donated a further \$200.

Since then, we have learnt the tremendous support for Chereninup Creek left the Trust with enough funds to purchase another property in the nearby Goodwana Link reserve system

\* If you would like more information of the Chereninup Creek Reserve, Goodwana Link, or the Funds other work - contact Australian Bush Heritage Fund  
GPO Box 101 Hobart Tas 7001  
www.bushheritage.org

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\* **THE WIDER VISION - VICTORIA**

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*Trust for Nature (Victoria)*

The Trust for Nature plays an invaluable role in helping to protect privately owned natural bush - the grasslands, wetlands, forests and heathlands - which sit outside government protection. CRISP donated in June \$100 in support of this work.

Included in the many Victorian areas the Trust has helped to protect and maintain are *Churchill Island, Ralph Illidge Sanctuary, Anglesea heathlands, William Ricketts Sanctuary, Mount Elephant*. This year they have been involved in the successful protection of at least 20 small, but significant areas across the State - and, at present, are in the process of purchasing a superb 750 hectare block in the *Little Desert* area

\* For more information on their activities contact them at : 2/385 Little Lonsdale Street  
Tel. 9670 9933

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\* **THE WORTH OF WATTLES**

*Just when one feels the winter woes will seemingly never cease, a few round balls of soft cream appear on the stark branches of the *Acacia ulicifolia* to herald the approaching Spring. A couple of weeks later, these are joined by bursts of bright yellow from the small compact *Acacia myrtifolia*. Then the cascading branches of the *Acacia leprosa* and the *Acacia paradoxa* slowly unfold their differing garlands of sunny colour. The stillness of the winter mood is suddenly displaced by the wild winds of Spring. As these winds sweep through, another coating of colour ripples along the upright branches of the *Acacia stricta*, while above, the golden balls of the taller *Acacia pycnantha* join the dance of swaying sprays proclaiming the coming again of Australian summer heat.*

Here, in Maroondah, we are fortunate in having a wide variety of indigenous wattles:

**Small to medium shrubs:**

***Acacia ulicifolia* (juniper wattle)**

**1-2m x 1.2m**

Prefers moist, well-drained soils. Used as a low screen provides prickly barrier & bird refuge.

***Acacia myrtifolia* (myrtle wattle)**

**1-3m x 1-2m**

Adaptable ornamental bush, with reddish stems. Provides low screening. A heavy prune can be beneficial

***Acacia genistifolia* (spreading wattle)**

**1-3m x 1-3m**

Usually adaptable. Prickly foliage provides refuge for small birds



*Juniper Wattle *Acacia ulicifolia*.*

Drawing : Gwyn Davies

## Medium to large shrubs

### **Acacia paradoxa (hedge wattle) 2-4m x 2.5m**

Very ornamental, dense and spreading. Adaptable to any situation. Its thorny habit provides refuge for birds

### **Acacia stricta (hop wattle) 2.5m x 2-4m**

Reliable, quick-growing and ideal for planting under existing trees. Drought hardy

### **Acacia vertifolia (prickly moses) 2.6m x 3.5m**

Another useful bird refuge. Moist conditions. Withstands periods of waterlogging. Pruning whilst young encourages a bushy habit. Fishing line was made from the fibre

### **Acacia leprosa (cinnamon wattle) 3-10m x 2-5m**

Reliable, excellent screening plant. Dense weeping habit. Foliage has a cinnamon fragrance on humid days or when crushed.

## Trees

### **Acacia pycnantha (golden wattle) 3-10m x 2-5m**

Australia's floral emblem. Fast growing and drought resistant. Pruning whilst young encourages dense growth. Important aborigine plant for food, containers, medicine and glue.

### **Acacia implexa (lightwood) 5-15m x 4-7m**

Adaptable, tolerating both wet and dry conditions. Long-living screen or shade tree. Its phyllodes are used for dyeing and bark for tanning. The fibres produced twine.

### **Acacia melanoxylon (blackwood) 5-30m x 4-15m**

Long-lived, providing screen & shade. Its fibre was used by aborigines to make fishing lines. Also provided weapons and medicine.

### **Acacia dealbata (silver wattle) 6-30m x 5-10m**

Prefers deep moist soils. An important aboriginal plant - the seeds and gum were eaten and axe handles were made from the wood. Host to the Imperial Blue Butterfly caterpillar when less than 3m high.

### **Acacia mearnsii (black wattle) 8-25m x 6-10m**

This attractive tree can be short-lived. Its bark, seed pods, leaves and flowers can be used for dyeing. The wood was used for aboriginal weapons and bark provided twine and medicine. The gum was a source of food, drink and adhesive.

Acknowledgement : Flora of Melbourne A guide to the indigenous plants of the Greater Melbourne area

\* **VOLUNTEER PROFILE**

As with most Australians, Lola and Charlie Mensch's passionate interest in our native Australian flora wasn't one that developed naturally from their youthful experiences. Surrounded as they were seventy to eighty years ago, by a culture that was largely indifferent to and often hostile to Australian flora and most Australian fauna.

Rather, theirs was an enthusiasm that grew imperceptibly over the decades until in 1984, on their first trip to W.A. they were suddenly and intensely made more fully aware of the unique beauty of the physical landscape and of the natural affinity that they, as Australians, had with that landscape.

Their first garden was in Box Hill in the 1940's and was typical of the era -- plenty of annuals and roses. Later gardens mixed a few natives with those seductively beautiful exotics - azaleas and rhododendrons. Meanwhile they had joined the Maroondah branch of Australian Plants Society. There they gained invaluable expertise while at the same time helping with the presentation of the legendary Ringwood Wildflower Show. But it wasn't until their 1984 trip when, overwhelmed by Australia's ancient beauty and suffused with the subtle, elusive charm and quietly enduring strength of our native flora, that they made a wholehearted commitment to Australian plants.

As luck would have it, enthusiasm and opportunity came together. Lola and Charlie had just moved house. Their new garden had plenty of trees, plenty of lawns and plenty of open space. They set to work with a vengeance! We might be encouraged in our endeavours by learning that unbridled enthusiasm can cause even committed expert gardeners like Lola and Charlie to make unwise planting decisions. Before long their lovely open space cleared of all trees, apart from a magnificent eucalyptus polyanthos (red box) and a melaleuca linariifolia (snow in summer), was home to SEVENTY GREVILLEA SPECIES - fast becoming rampant! A rethink had to be considered. Lola was already a member of the APS's correa and boronia study groups and had become interested, more generally, in the lower, compact forms of the rutaceae family. With advice from APS member, John Knight, they made the big switch. Over latter years they have been hard at work planting (and propagating) correas, croweas, zierias, boronias, phebaliums and eriostemons. At last count they reckon there are about 100 correas alone.

Both are interested in propagation. It is their preferred method of sourcing plants, not only for their own use, but for CRISP, Bushlinks and Friends groups at Karwarra Native Garden and Cranbourne Royal Botanic Gardens where they are the most faithful of volunteers. Lola began propagating with only a white polystyrene box and plastic cover. Eventually Charlie had time to build a poly house which, though unheated, produces great results. They use a mixture of three parts sand and one part peat moss, first dipping or powdering the cuttings with a hormone growth treatment before leaving them to their own devices. They encourage everyone to "have a go" at propagating.

Lola and Charlie love the work they do rehabilitating and nurturing the "Australianess" of their environment and they enjoy the friendships made nationwide with like-minded people. But they are somewhat pessimistic about the outlook for the physical environment. They feel there has to be a very serious effort made to educate Australians about the madness of their seemingly insatiable dependence on fossil fuels, about the dangers of further implementing unsustainable farming practices (e.g. rice & cotton cultivation, unwise planting of vineyards,

broadacre farming) and about the unthinking behaviour of the urban dweller that leads to the spread of weeds, polluting of waterways, increase in exotic bird numbers and the destruction of small marsupials.

When relaxing Lola loves to do the cryptic crossword while Charlie scans the B.R.W. ("to keep in touch with the world") They both also enjoy reading the Australian geographic magazine.

Charlie and Lola are skilled, amazingly knowledgeable, generous and awe inspiringly hardworking. It was fitting that they were nominated, in 1998, for a Deakin award for service to the community in the area of conservation. The Mensch's have been volunteers with CRISP almost from its inception. It is only with the help of people such as the indomitable "climb anywhere, fix anything, anytime" Charlie that has enabled us to survive. Or the expertise of the gentle, tolerant Lola always ready to identify some mysterious new plant discovery -- even if it's of the weed variety! The community of Ringwood owes an inestimable debt of gratitude to the Mensch's and others of their ilk

Carmel Koesasi

\* **MEN AT WORK** *Moving the Garden Shed*

This year has been a real bonanza year for public sales.

So the sales area needed to be increased to allow more plant varieties to be readily available. Eviction notices were sent to all resident possums and spiders.

The garden shed - the only one we've got - stood in the way of any expansion. This is an heir-loom, donated by Council in the fledgling years of our establishment. Hence, it has an inherent value. Being an environmentally conscious "lot", we decided to move it down to a more appropriate spot. Down to the bottom of the site where all other sheds seem to live.

On the designated Saturday working bee, we had many helpers eager to tackle its dismantle.. Armed with shovels, picks, crowbars, hammers, screwdrivers, we soon had 'the thing' down, wall by wall, then the roof. "That was easy." commented Martin and Bill. "All we have to do now is remember how to put it all back together again!"

After lunch, the big move happened. All hands were on deck to re-assemble *The Shed*. With a bit of manoeuvring, and gentle persuasion with a hammer, it was done!

It has now been re-arranged into a better version of its former self, and that great effort called for beers all round.

Paul Chenery

## LOCAL FRIENDS GROUPS

### **Two new groups have begun operating !**

On a drizzling day, 18th August, the fledgling **Friends of B.J.Hubbard Reserve** held an "Environmental Day" including a sausage sizzle, with the invaluable help of Linda Bester from Maroondah Council's Bushcare Dept. Linda organised bushwalks to point out the indigenous species in the Reserve - some now rare in Maroondah - how weeds were degrading the bush and what nearby residents could do to help care for the Reserve. Jo and Dale, representing CRISP, promoted the work done by volunteers collecting seeds from Reserves such as Hubbard, and the propagating work at the nursery to enable re-planting back into their original bush areas.

Those enthusiasts who attended will be contacted soon for our next meeting which we hope will be attended by either Linda or Brad Curtis so that we can formulate a plan of action for the Reserve.

*\* for more information contact Kay on 9879 8445*

**Mullum Mullum Creek Bushcare** group held its first working bee on Sunday, 8th September. Twenty boxes of plants rescued from areas recently lost to new houses and the freeway were planted, together with 150 tubes of trees and grasses for weed control. All plants were donated by CRISP Nursery.

The group aims to work along the creek between Oban Rd and Suda Ave concentrating on six small areas of remnant indigenous vegetation. Each of these will be visited twice a year for weeding and planting. Slowly, the decline of habitat will be arrested and improvements seen.

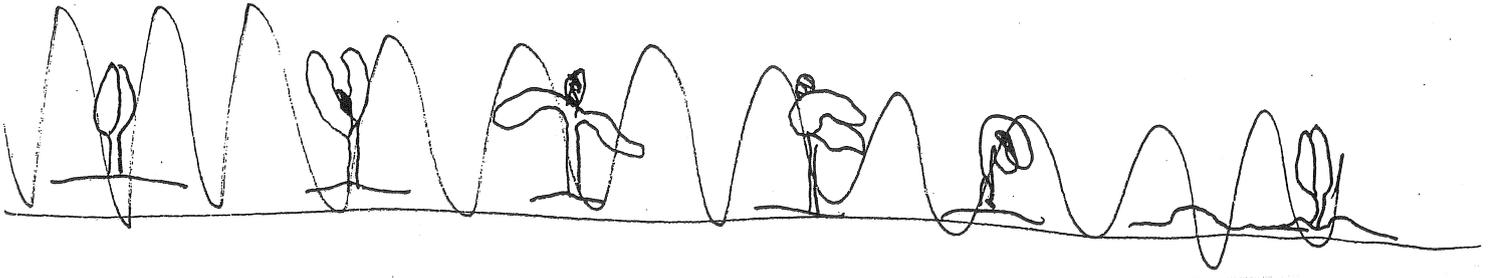
Support from Maroondah City Council encompasses removing weeds after working bees, providing insurance for volunteers, etc. Melbourne Water has been doing much bank stabilisation along the Mullum and volunteers will support this by keeping some of the weeds down. Most of all, help is needed from nearby residents and those who use it for recreational purposes.

*\* For more information call Dale on 9870 1060*

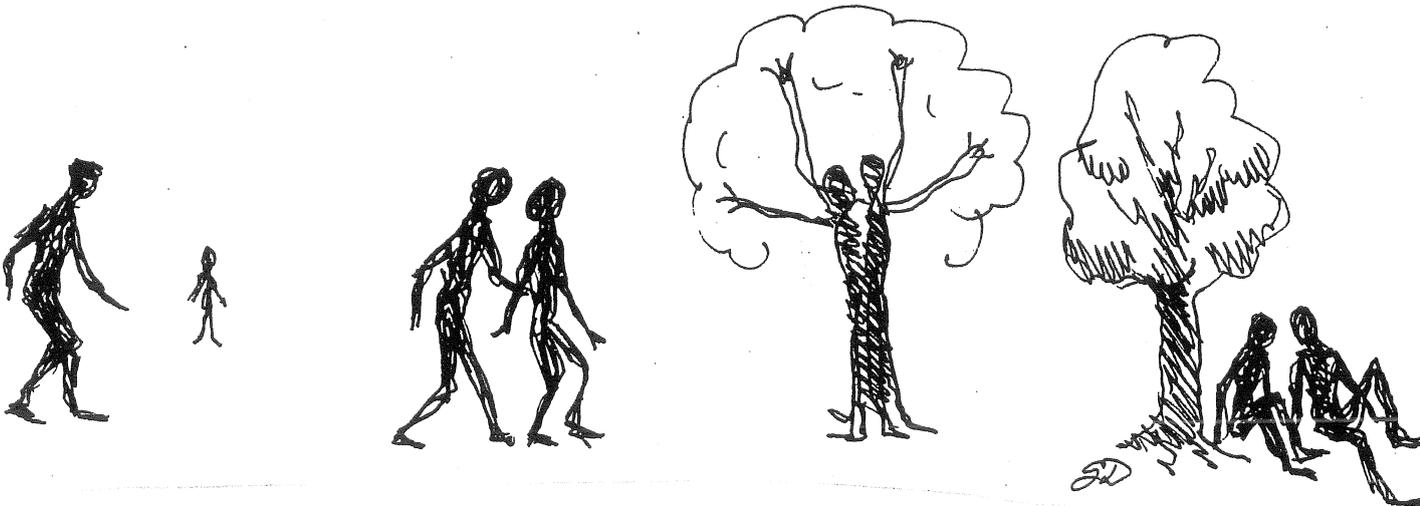
### **AND, MEANWHILE, THE FOLLOWING GROUPS WOULD WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:**

- \* First Friends of Dandenong Creek**  
Working together with the relevant authorities and local residents to improve the quality of the creek and its environs, they would appreciate help with their water testing regime.

*\* contact Barry on 9801 1628*



- \* **Heathmont Bushlinks**  
This award-winning group cares for various bushland areas in Heathmont, weeding and maintaining approx. 8 sites to encourage regeneration of indigenous flora.  
Working bees - first Sunday of each month - 10am - 1 pm  
\* contact Roger 9235 7231(w) 8801 5230(h)
- \* **Friends of Loughies Bushland** - Kubis Drive, Nth Ringwood  
Working bees - first Saturday of each month - 9.30am - 1 pm  
\* contact Carol 9870 8126
- \* **F.C. Rogers Reserve** - between railway & Campbell St, Heathmont  
Working bees - first Wednesday of each month - 12am - 2pm  
\* contact Gwen 9879 1427
- \* **Friends of Wombolano Park** - off Canterbury Rd. Ringwood East  
Working bees - third Sunday of each month - 10am - 1pm  
\* contact Andy 9729 2346
- \* **Yanggai Barring** - a linea waterway reserve extending from Wonga and Langli Rds, Warranwood, with recently installed bird watching platform. Currently involved with Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School Community Service programme.  
\* contact Pat 9723 3580



\* Drawings by Gwyn Davies, Crispian volunteer

**\* A COUNCIL INITIATIVE**

*Maroondah City Council has recently introduced a very welcome initiative to support local residents in the protection and enhancement of surviving remnant areas.*

**THE BIODIVERSITY RATING CONCESSION PROGRAM**

The program aims to improve the long-time survival of biodiversity through a rate rebate, land management assistance, advice and training of landowners in protective methods. This will be achieved through management agreements.

Management agreements, such as section 173 agreement, will include a restriction or registration on the property title. A management plan will be developed in conjunction with a section 173 agreement, a conservation covenant, a management agreement or a letter of agreement. A standard agreement will be for a period of one to three years. Management plans will follow the Australian Natural Heritage Charter. The three levels of management agreements are:

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Level 1 | Conservation Covenant or Section 173 agreement                     |
| Level 2 | Management agreement between Council and owner                     |
| Level 3 | Letter of agreement between Council and owner. Written undertaking |

The BRCP has several different criteria to identify an eligible property. Maroondah properties that are identified in the Maroondah Planning Scheme under the Site of Biological Significance Overlay will be given priority, however properties not identified under the scheme will be considered. Private properties must have one or more of the following attributes to be eligible for the program:

- \* A conservation covenant
- \* Identified site of biological significance
- \* Contribution to a wildlife or green corridor
- \* Registration with the Land for Wildlife program
- \* Property size should be approx 2000 sq metres (1/2acre) minimum

There are three levels of rebate granted. The highest concession ..offered to covenanted land. The levels of rebate are:

|         |                                 |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| Level 1 | 50% (up to a maximum of \$1200) |
| Level 2 | 35% (up to a maximum of \$800)  |
| Level 3 | 25% (up to a maximum of \$500)  |

