



MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

P.O. Box 657, Kenmore. 4069

www.moggillcreek.org

MCCG NEWSLETTER: AUTUMN 2018

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ABOVE: The 'catch-light' in the eye of Grey Butcherbird. For photography hints from Ed Frazer, turn to page 4.



LEFT: "...the bird got a huge fright and out came this little fellow." Read the rest of the story from Ed on page 5.

BELOW, LEFT: A male plant of the Brown Pine (picture: Peter Metzendorf). Turn to pages 4 & 5 for Bryan Hacker's popular Weeds and Seeds features.



ABOVE: SAVE THE DATE! Sunday 10th June 2018 is Kids' Day at the Cottage. (Dale Borgelt's picture, above, is of Tiana (R), sampling one of the previous Kids' Day activities organised by Jan Blok (L). For more from Dale turn to page 8

Chairman's Report

Since taking over in January from our excellent previous Chairman, Warren Hoey, I have experienced a rapid 'learning curve.' I am still getting to grips with the plethora of catchment groups, landcare and wildlife protection organisations that operate in the Brisbane area. It doesn't help that most of them are only usually referred to by acronyms, but I am slowly getting to know them, and the key people involved.

In January, our Vice-Chairman Malcolm Frost organised a meeting of MCCG Bushcare Group Leaders, to discuss common problems and potential solutions. Matters discussed included safety issues, managing ticks, and the recruitment of volunteers. Leigh Ward, a biochemist and long-term member of the Huntington/Tuckett bushcare group gave an excellent presentation on safety issues relating to the use of glyphosate (Roundup) weedkiller. The overall conclusion was that it is safe for both humans and the environment, provided that it is used correctly and sparingly. [See meeting report, page 7—Ed.]

Recruitment of new members is a perennial issue for many of our bushcare groups, especially since none of us are getting any younger, (although I am a firm believer that getting out into our wonderful environment and doing some planting or weeding is beneficial to both physical and mental health). With this in mind, we will be running a stall in the Kenmore Village shopping centre over the week-end of 21/22 April, aimed at both signing up new MCCG members and recruiting bushcare volunteers. As well as encouraging more volunteers of all ages to participate in our existing bushcare groups, we will be urging people (especially those living on acreage properties) to get together with their neighbours and form new groups. Thank you to everyone who volunteers a couple of hours of your time to help out on the stall.

Finally, I recently attended an excellent workshop on 'Nature Writing' run by Brisbane City Council for bushcare group volunteers and creek catchment officers etc. It was run by Inga Simpson, author of several books about, or set in, the Australian environment. Despite some initial reservations, I found it quite inspiring and it reinforced my belief that it is never too late to try something new!

Jim Pope

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Editorial

Put the 1st of June in your diary now. That will give you ten days to write something about your revegetation progress, the fun you have as part of the local 'section,' an issue of interest to fellow MCCG Members, a 'help needed'/'advice wanted' enquiry, or perhaps even time to ask your kids to write about, draw or photograph something in the catchment?

*The deadline to submit your articles and images to me for the next issue of the newsletter is **10 June 2018**. Easy to remember—the same date as the next MCCG Kids' Day! Better still, why not write something **NOW** and send it to me. I am sure EVERYONE has at least 100 words they could write... so email me soon with your ideas for YOUR newsletter (emails please to mccgeditor@outlook.com.au). I look forward to hearing from you, as I'd love to include some new 'voices' in the Winter issue.*

Cathi



On the lookout! Eastern Sedge Frog, by Solveig Gillis. One of the winning shots from the 2017 MCCG competition.

Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) is a volunteer action group, aiming to conserve & improve the natural environment of our catchment on both private & public land.

Chairman: Jim Pope

Secretary: Sanja Oldridge

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Articles of interest to Members are always welcome.

The Editor reserves the right not to publish any item submitted. Material will be edited for clarity, style and space. The decision of the Editor is final. *Please email your ideas direct to mccgeditor@outlook.com.au.*

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National Waterbug Survey

Citizen science is a great way to get involved with major projects that have an impact on our lives. Luckily, many tasks seem to include spending time in our wonderful local surroundings. Here's more to whet (wet?!) your appetite. Full details are on the MCCG website (www.moggillcreek.org).

The MCCG has monitored creek health in the Moggill Creek Catchment for many years (from 2011-16). The various activities are a great way to encourage community involvement. Methods include surveys of waterbug (macro-invertebrate) diversity—offering a chance to learn new skills and to become better informed about how waterbugs are used as an index of creek health. The extract, below, is from information received via *Healthy Land and Water*.

The **National Waterbug Blitz** is Australia's first nationwide, citizen science, waterway monitoring event. In spring each year, Australians are encouraged to discover how healthy their local waterways and wetlands are, simply by exploring and identifying what waterbugs live in them.



What are waterbugs?

Waterbugs (or aquatic macroinvertebrates) are small invertebrates that live in freshwater. These can include juvenile stages of many insects like dragonflies, damselflies, mayflies, caddisflies, water beetles,

and more. Each type of waterbug has a certain sensitivity to pollution or water quality changes in their waterway—which means that the type and number of bugs found in a waterway indicate how healthy it is.

When? The National Waterbug Blitz is a month-long event to be held each October (starting in 2018, visit the upcoming website (www.waterbugblitz.org.au)). **Who can be involved?** Anyone. The National Waterbug Blitz aims to get community groups, schools, farmers and residents to help collect information on local waterway biodiversity through waterbug surveys. Experts will also be on hand to help with training and identification. **What training or resources will be available?** Participant information and resources will be available on the website (www.waterbugblitz.org.au) and via a special Waterbug App (free via Google Play and the App Store, from September 2018).

Adrian Webb

Toadying?

Sometimes you see the strangest sights from the window of the car... and just wish you had a camera to capture the image. Driving through Chapel Hill, on 9th March 2018, I saw a group of adults and younger people, walking purposely along the pavement. Perhaps not quite so unusual? What drew my attention was that most were wearing head torches, and the crew included one with a garden rake, and a second who was pulling a large blue and white esky...



Fortunately, I'd read the MCCG Facebook post, caught up with the information on the MCCG website, and read Phil Bird's *Froggin'* piece in the Summer newsletter. So, I was reassured that this was part of the Cane Toad Challenge in action—and not some strange ceremony taking place in darkest Chapel Hill. If any Member was at the event and has some photographs to share (and information on the experience of being part of a citizen science project to capture adult cane toads*)... I'd love to hear from you.

***Note:** The purpose of the event was to assist with supplying the UQ Cane Toad Challenge Team with adult toads. The toxins from the adult toads are used to synthesise the baits used for the tadpole traps. The photograph, above, is from the IMB website, which has a wealth of information on the project (<https://imb.uq.edu.au/canetoadchallenge>).

Cathí Lawrence

MCCG Facebook Reach

The MCCG post about the Cane Toad Challenge reached nearly 9,000 people, indicating the extent to which the disposal of toads is a hot topic!

Don't forget to email me with news to share

(mccgfacebook@gmail.com).

Janine Nicklin

Encourage YOUR Friends to join us.

MCCG will have a special stand on 21/22 April 2018, at Kenmore Shopping Village. A chance to sign up new members, and perhaps encourage more volunteers to join local bushcare groups. Two free native plants will be offered to new members who join the MCCG at the stand. More information can also be found at our website (www.moggillcreek.org).

Weeds: Catch 'em Young!

We mostly recognise our main weed tree species, such as Chinese Celtis and camphor laurel (and shrubs such as lantana and ochna). Catching them before flowering and seeding prevents them contributing to the further spread of that species. It can also make a significant contribution to your bushland property to catch the weeds when they are young. This entails learning to recognise the weeds as tiny plants, before they have developed flowers or seeds.

The photo (below) is of a small ochna plant (sometimes referred to as Mickey Mouse bush). Mature plants of ochna are readily identifiable, the flowers initially yellow, but turning to red and with black fruit when mature. They are difficult to kill with herbicides (check the Biosecurity Queensland Fact Sheet for details) and even quite small plants have well developed root systems, making them difficult to pull out (if you happen to fall in a creek, you can rely on any nearby ochna as support when climbing out!). Ochna seedlings can readily be identified by their leaves—up to 5cm long, narrow, glossy, with serrated and 'wavy' margins. At this stage they can easily be pulled out by hand or dug out with a mattock.



Many weeds can readily be identified as seedlings. In the case of camphor laurel, a guide is the discolourous leaves (much paler on the under-surface than the upper). To be sure, just crush a leaf and the smell of camphor will give the game away. *Bryan Hacker*

Photography Competition: Hints on 'Catching' the Birds

Details on the 2018 MCCG Photo Competition will be in our next Newsletter. To encourage everyone to start photographing now, Ed Frazer—the bird lover responsible for many of the fantastic pictures of birds which are available on the MCCG website—shares five hints on how to 'catch the birds.'

It's the time of year to start thinking about the MCCG Photo Competition. I thought the standard last year



Photograph: 2017 People's Choice Category First Prize Winner *Fast Food For Fledglings*, by Ed Frazer.

was terrific. There were so many beautiful entries, viewed by a large number of shoppers in Kenmore Village. As many were photos of birds in the Catchment here are a few tips:

1. **Try to get close to the bird.** That usually means using a telephoto lens of 300mm to 500mm, or a camera with 30 to 50 times zoom.
2. **Best not to go chasing the bird.** Get a comfortable chair and hide against a shrub, so that you stake out an area where the birds will come. I locate suitable flowering plants such as Grevilleas, or shrubs with ripening fruit such as Lillipillies or Figs, where I'm likely to find spectacular birds like Rose-crowned Fruit-doves.
3. **Get the sun in the right position.** Usually behind your back, but you can get artistic effects with backlighting. The sun a little to the side produces shadows that give shape to the bird. Avoid the middle of the day because of harsh shadows.
4. Try to get photos of the bird **looking towards you.** That will get a "catch-light" in its eye, which is more engaging (*see the front cover picture, demonstrating the impact of the 'catch-light' in the eye of a Grey Butcherbird*).
5. A bird feeding or **doing something** is always more interesting. For example, a winner in the 2016 MCCG Photography Competition was an engaging shot of a Pacific Baza looking out at the photographer from behind a tree.

Good luck with *your* photography. I look forward to seeing you in the catchment with your camera!

Ed Frazer

Bush Bite: Antechinus

Are you developing an appetite for the MCCG Bush Bites? Visit the [MCCG website](http://www.moggillcreek.org.au) to read more, or email Michelle Johnston with your own Bush Bite (contact Michelle on webedit2@moggillcreek.org.au). The latest story is more of a 'photo-essay' from Ed Frazer. We can all agree with Michelle that Ed takes some "amazing photos!" We don't have space for every picture here, so visit our website for the full story...

If a picture is worth a thousand words, here is the equivalent of 10,000! I'm not knowledgeable about the names or identification of the different species of Antechinus so these photos may be of the Yellow-footed, Brown or the newly discovered Buff-footed Antechinus. Hopefully one of our readers may be able to identify which one from my photos.



The first is of an Antechinus that was holed up during the day in a crevice between two tree trunks near the top of our hill. I was photographing a White-throated Treecreeper when the bird got a huge fright and out came this little fellow (see left, and also the picture on the front cover).

The photo, below, is of an Antechinus that was helping itself to mealworms I was putting out to encourage the Painted Button-quail to come into camera range. This was in a much wetter area, in a gully at the back of our garden. I took many pictures over several days, and gradually it became less timid.



The final picture of my story is of a cat, taken with an infra-red triggered camera (visit our website for the picture). The image is one of several I have taken at night. The cat was playing with an animal before it

killed it. It is not clear if it was an Antechinus, a Melomys or a mouse, but I am in no doubt that Antechinus and other small native animals are being slaughtered by domestic cats that are allowed to hunt native wildlife at night.

Ed Frazer

Seeds: Brown Pine (*Podocarpus elatus*)

Brown pine is a very elegant tree which can grow to 40m tall, and which has a single, vertical trunk with mostly spreading branches. Leaves are 3-18cm long, 1.5-2cm wide, dark green above, paler beneath, hairless, on a very short stalk.

Brown pine is a dioecious species, with trees being either male or female. The picture, below, is of a female tree, showing a 'cone.' In contrast, the reproductive areas of male trees are very different, and are clustered together, as shown in the front cover picture.



Brown pine is one of the few local native species in the non-flowering plants known as the Gymnosperms (the others being cycads and hoop and kauri pines, with several other genera occurring elsewhere in Queensland). Gymnosperms differ from flowering plants in that the seed is not enclosed in an ovary but is exposed, frequently in a cone structure. In the case of brown pine, there are 2-5 fused scales to the 'cone,' with only one or two ovules developing to maturity, when the scales become swollen and berry-like. When ripe, the 'fruit' is fleshy, with a firm and globose 8-12 mm long seed seated on a fleshy blue-black receptacle 2-2.5cm in diameter. The timber has been used for many purposes, including for making furniture. The fleshy 'fruit' may be used for making sauces and jams. *Podocarpus* species are generally subtropical-tropical. The genus includes about 100 species, two of which occur in South-east Queensland, the other being *P. spinulosus*, from Stradbroke Island. Brown pine is naturally restricted to eastern Australia (from Cape York to south-eastern NSW). We currently have a good supply of brown pine plants at our Nursery, available free to our members.

Bryan Hacker

Cottage Talks

The February Cottage talk, by mycology expert Dr Diana Leemon, *Fungi: The threads that bind the ecosystem (Why are they so fantastic? Why are they not plants?)*, was a fascinating presentation. Diana noted that fungi are a *unique* form of life (multicellular organisms, which must take in nutrients from the environment and which “digest” food *outside* their bodies, with a plasticity in morphology, reproduction and roles). Fungi have been around at least 545 million years, have had a major impact on human history, and are critical to the health of all ecosystems. For those that missed it, Diana has agreed to come again to talk to us all later in the year. If you are interested in attending future Cottage Talks, do make sure you contact Dale Borgelt to express an interest/book your place (email daleborgelt@gmail.com).

Dale Borgelt

MCCG Review Highlights

Malcolm Frost has supplied a short extract from the formal review of the first 20 years of the MCCG (a review undertaken by Malcolm, in conjunction with Adrian Webb and Warren Hoey). Such reviews are a time-consuming and vital part of the work of our committee, acting as an important record of the MCCG's achievements and challenges.

In 2016, the MCCG began a second review of its activities since its establishment in 1997. The first review was published in 2011. Both documents are on our website, and printed copies are available for reference at the Cottage.

The stand-out achievement from this latest review of MCCG activities (to December 2016) is the energy and dedication of our members to improving the local environment—whether through active involvement in working bees to protect existing bushland, or when choosing to plant native species on private properties. Involving the community in a wide range of activities has enabled us to raise the MCCG's profile at a local level, which has resulted in growing membership numbers.

However, despite 20 years of sustained efforts, the catchment remains under environmental stress. Major factors include habitat loss and fragmentation, weed invasion, soil erosion, riparian zone degradation, creek bank instability and stormwater runoff. For example, riparian zone vegetation has been severely degraded along approximately 50% of the streams in the mid to upper catchment, and upwards of 90% in the lower part. Major weeds in the middle and lower parts of the catchment are Chinese celtis and asparagus vine—

while glycine, ochrea, Madeira vine and cats claw creeper are a serious challenge throughout the entire catchment, particularly in the more fertile riparian zones.

Notwithstanding this, volunteers in all sections have achieved some very successful revegetation on public lands in riparian zones. But even in these revegetated areas, long-term weed control remains a challenge.

Restoring habitat corridors from the riparian zones (in the lower half of the catchment) to the lower slopes (which are largely cleared), to link with habitat on the hills, remains our biggest problem. We see this as a long-term challenge, which needs to be addressed in overall city planning *before* urban development spreads into what others appear to see as a “land bank” for Brisbane.

MCCG recognises the importance of supporting restoration work on the private lands that comprise almost 70% of the catchment. To this end, the MCCG is supporting the establishment and operations of community groups in Pacey Rd and Upper Brookfield Rd, and is seeking funds from all levels of government to target weed management activities in remnant forests on private properties.

Malcolm Frost, Adrian Webb and Warren Hoey

Renew Your Membership Now!

Dale Borgelt reminds us of the importance of prompt renewal of our membership, and of the many benefits of joining the MCCG.

MCCG Memberships need renewal each year. We have over 500 members, but they only ‘count’ if they have paid for the current year. **2018 MCCG memberships are now due.**

Renewal is a good time to think about the advantages of being part of a volunteer group that aims to conserve and improve the natural environment of our catchment on both private and public land. Our Bushcare groups generally work on public land. In addition, members working on their own land make a valuable contribution to the catchment environment—especially if they are using the membership advantages of **FREE** landcare advice and tube stock native plants relevant to the area. This past year alone, members received over 10,000 free plants from our volunteer-run Nursery.

The MCCG has many events and activities that are not limited to members. For example: *Kids' Day at the Cottage*, *Annual Photography Competition*, *Creek Health Monitoring Program*, *Platypus Survey* and *public meetings* in Brookfield Hall. But the advantage of

membership is that you know about these events and activities and are invited to participate. Members also receive this popular quarterly Newsletter, with its nice mix of news and technical information. Members receive an electronic copy of each Newsletter *and* can also opt-in to receiving a printed copy.

We hope that every member agrees it is a wonderful investment of \$20 (per person) *and* that everyone will make sure their annual membership fees for 2018 are paid-up. A Membership Renewal form is enclosed with the Newsletter for current 2017 members.

Anyone wishing to **join** the MCCG for the first time needs to fill out a *New Member application form* and send it to: The Secretary, MCCG, PO Box 657, Kenmore, QLD 4069. Application forms can be downloaded from www.moggillcreek.org, or why not visit our stand at Kenmore Shopping Village on 21/22 April and sign up on the day. *Dale Borgelt*



Photograph (above): One of the winning pictures from the 2017 MCCG Photography Competition—Darren Sinclair's *Double Vision*.

Section Leader Meeting Update: Managing Working Bees

I was wondering why I hadn't heard about the progress of one of our hard-working Sections, until I heard that the Section Leaders have been sharing ideas at a recent discussion hosted by Malcolm Frost. Hopefully we will hear about another group in our next issue. In the meantime, a meeting update...

As part of producing a four-year progress report (now on our website, with a printed copy at the Cottage), it was recommended that Section Leaders should get together and discuss common issues. The first such meeting was held in January 2018. As the agenda was far too ambitious we were only able to address a few interesting topics—making the meeting a 'part one!'

Action points from the discussions included:

☆ **Working Bee Records:** Concerns about the wording of records (which volunteers are asked to sign to cover any injuries) were discussed, as it appears to imply volunteers could only work if they had been trained by Habitat Brisbane personnel. We plan to discuss suggested new wording with Habitat Brisbane (the meeting proposed a change to "*Do not undertake any work that you have not been trained for by a Habitat Brisbane trained leader*").

☆ **Use of glyphosate ('Roundup'):** Dr Leigh Ward, a recently-retired biochemist from the University of Queensland, gave an interesting presentation on glyphosate use in controlling weeds. Leigh concluded that epidemiological evidence does not support any causal relationship between glyphosate and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or other cancers. The consensus in the meeting was that, as glyphosate was so effective in controlling a range of weeds, it should be used to assist weed control—provided that it is used with care, that the use of foliate spraying is minimised, and that the herbicide is mainly used for cutting and dabbing on weed stems.

☆ **Treating tick bites:** Various methods were reviewed, including the use of Wartoff, Aerogard, Glycerine (or inert organic cream, to suffocate the insect), Aerostart (to kill the insect quickly), or the use of a Medi-Freeze device (as recommended in an ABC documentary). No firm recommendation could be agreed.

☆ **How to encourage more volunteers:** Some initiatives discussed at the meeting included:

- **Encourage** the formation of new groups in parts of the catchment primarily located on private land.
- **Contact** schools, industry and community groups, to attract like-minded people.
- **MCCG website** to list working bee dates, places and contact details.
- **Advertise** working bees and MCCG activities at Kenmore Village.
- **Maintain** an email list of non-members who participate in working bees—and encourage them to participate in future MCCG activities.
- **Document** methods that are currently being used to attract new volunteers (and develop new ways of attracting people).
- **Acknowledge** the value of people working on their own land.

There were many other ideas which, through lack of time, were only briefly examined. We hope to explore these further at our next meeting.

Malcolm Frost

Froggin' Around

Phil Bird shares some more fascinating information about the occupants of our local creeks.

Litoria wilcoxii (Stony creek frog) is found around rocky flowing creeks and is common in our catchment. The female is larger (up to 70 mm) and identified by a grey to brown colour with irregular blotching. A uniform dark stripe runs from the nostril, passes uninterrupted through the eye, above a distinct dark tympanum, and on to the shoulder where it breaks into a series of spots on the flank. Females often forage away from water. The male is smaller (up to 45 mm), grey to dark brown, with a yellow tinge to totally yellow when breeding. The stripe is as for the female. The lower surface is white and granular, except for the throat which is smooth and white in females and mottled around the edges with dark brown in breeding males. The groin is yellow, heavily blotched with black. The hind side of the thigh has black and yellow markings. Fingers are free from web and the toes three-quarter webbed. Males congregate on rocks near the water, making a call in early spring to late autumn that is a quiet low whirring sound, a little like running water (listen to David Stewart's CD of *Australian Frog Calls—Subtropical East*).



Picture: Adult pair of *Litoria wilcoxii* in amplexus (Picture credit: Ric Natrass, from QFSI database).

Breeding often occurs during spring and early summer, frequently after rains. Eggs are deposited in slow-moving water while the pair lie on the bottom, with several hundred eggs being deposited in a solid gelatinous mass which adheres to submerged rocks. Seven days later tadpoles hatch, and can grow up to 45mm total length. It is possible to identify frog species by tadpole features (*Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia* by Marion Anstis, 2002). Stony creek frog tadpoles are dark brown with a contrasting band on lower part of body, streamlined in shape, and wider than deep. Tadpoles are found in the bottom of creeks,

adhering to rocks with their oral disc. Metamorphosis occurs after about 50 days.

Be careful when seeking to identify your frogs as *Litoria latopalmata* (Broad palmed rocket frog) is quite similar. It has a distinct whitish comma-shaped break in the head stripe immediately before the eye.

Phil Bird

Kids' Day Date Claimer!

Mark your calendar now: The MCCG Kids' Day at the Cottage will be on Sunday 10th June 2018.

We are delighted there will be no clashing events this year, as Seqwater is hosting only the MCCG Kids' Day at the Cottage at the Gold Creek Dam Reserve on 10th June. There are no clashes with other major green events either, so Martin Fingland will have even more to show in his wonderful wildlife presentations.



Picture, above, by Dale. Fun at a recent Kids' Day.

All Kids' Day at the Cottage activities and attractions are **FREE**. Presenters work out new ways to highlight features of our natural world, so there is plenty for kids to enjoy — whether as first-timers or environmentally aware regulars who come each year to find out more, see, make, do and help. MCCG is grateful for the support of Kids' Day at the Cottage by Seqwater, BCC Creek Catchment Program, Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund and Pullenvale Ward Councillor.

Dale Borgelt

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Always wanted to get into print? The DEADLINE for material for the next issue of the MCCG Newsletter is 10 June. Don't wait until June. Why not write something NOW and email the editor mccgeditor@outlook.com.au.