



MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

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www.moggillcreek.org.au

MCCG NEWSLETTER: Winter 2019

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ABOVE: Turn to page 5 for a wonderful report, from Java Terry, about a Venture Scout Environmental Badge project at the Tyamolum Scout Campground (Picture credit: Java Terry).

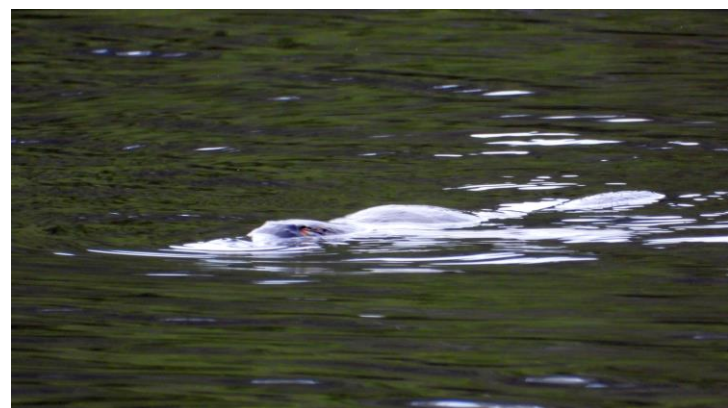


ABOVE (Hoop Pine Picture credit: Ed Frazer): **Our NEXT Newsletter will focus on TREES.** The articles on pages 6 & 7 by Ed, Michelle and Jim are bound to inspire everyone. So start writing now, and [email our Editor](#) before 1 September 2019. Pictures or drawings of your favourite trees particularly welcome!



ABOVE: Bag stamping fun at the 2019 MCCG Kids' Day at the Cottage (picture: Dale Borgelt). See p.3 for more.

BELOW: Platypus at Gold Creek Reservoir: "I watched it between around 12.30 and 12.50pm on Saturday 1st June. At first it was well away from the shore, probably more than 100m, and it gradually moved closer to me" (picture and caption by Chris Burwell). For more 'things platypus,' turn to page 7.



Chairman's report

All of us have experienced the feeling of wellbeing that results from time spent in picturesque natural surroundings. Contact with nature has long been known to reduce stress levels and help us relax. Recent research (*Frontiers in Psychology*, 4 April 2019) has shown that just twenty minutes spent in a place that makes you feel in contact with nature will significantly lower your stress hormone levels. This study showed that a 'nature experience' produced a 21.3%/hour drop in the stress hormone, cortisol. The efficiency of such a 'nature pill' was greatest between 20 and 30 minutes, after which benefits continued to accrue, but at a reduced rate. My own belief is that the benefits are compounded by doing something to enhance the quality of the environment, such as gardening or bushcare work. These activities have the added advantage that you can see the fruits of your work accruing over time. So, get out there and pop a quick-acting nature pill by joining one of our working bees (details of which are on our website), or better still, get together with some of your neighbours and form your own bushcare group!

Jim Pope

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: Kathleen Walmsley

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Newsletter Editor: Dr Catherine A. Lawrence (Cathi)

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, and no correspondence will be entered into. **Please email your ideas direct to mccgeditor@outlook.com.au.**

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Editorial

*There are some great items in this newsletter, many of which I hope will be the first of regular features – including a fascinating profile by Ed Frazer on the magic worked by one of the many local unsung heroes in our Catchment (in this issue, Mike Humphreys). I have also had a number of items on the subject of trees. I hope this will inspire many Members to share information about their favourite trees (whether veteran, heritage, or newly-planted). **The next issue will have a special focus on trees. All thoughts and pictures welcome, from Members of any age (1st September deadline).** I look forward to receiving YOUR email (mccgeditor@outlook.com.au).*

Cathi

MCCG Website & Butterflies

Michelle Johnston updates us on new information to be found on our fantastic website – and some great news on the Birdwing Recovery project (see also Cody Hochen's article in our last Newsletter).

Recent milestones would suggest that the birdwing crusade is rapidly gaining momentum. The Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network (RBCN) recently opened a new Woodford–Samford birdwing butterfly vine (*Pararistolochia praevenosa*) corridor, to the north of Brisbane, with an official and well-attended launch day at Samford on 9 June.

RBCN's May 2019 *Birdwing News* also reports that a female Richmond birdwing butterfly was recently spotted laying an egg on North Stradbroke Island, and another was seen flying across the Gold Coast Seaway.

To assist in recording such sightings, a new citizen science project has been launched. Community members are invited to report any Richmond birdwing butterfly sightings during the past five years. The data will be added to Living Atlas of Australia (see the [EcoEducation Service website](#)).

While on all things butterfly, our website "[Butterflies](#)" page has been re-vamped. We have expanded it, so it now includes: an overview of the *Lepidoptera* family (butterflies and moths); information about butterfly host plants for your garden; a page dedicated to the Richmond Birdwing Project (with a link to Cody's full article, which is recommended reading!); and our online [Field Guide to Butterflies within the Catchment](#), to help you identify and better understand these exquisite insects. **Head to our [website for more](#).**

Michelle Johnston

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For more, visit our website (www.moggillcreek.org) or Facebook page (@MoggillCreek).

A Very Happy MCGG Kids' Day

The sun came out for the 2019 *Kids' Day at the Cottage*. Kids of all ages found environmentally themed activities to enjoy – with much to make, do, and see. The Wildlife Shows by Martin Fingland are always a highlight – and 2019 visitors were delighted when the crowd favourite, 'Bumpy' (the wombat) came out to be patted and adored. Two new activities this year were the bag-making and loom-weaving. Stamping, drawing and marking their own bag, was very popular (see front cover, and below, pictures from the event



by Dale Borgelt), and there were many volunteers to help with the weaving. At the end of the day, as a result of many eager hands *Weaving with Nature* on the special looms (designed by Tory

Shenstone and Phillip Hawes), there were two large completed looms, woven only from colourful textures of 'threads' of nature (see picture, below left, of Tory with helpers, at work weaving – and, right, with one of the completed looms). The looms were left at the Cottage, but many visiting kids took home other creations they had made – as well as joyful experiences of their contact with the natural world in all the activities and attractions of the day.



MCGG is grateful to Seqwater (Water for Life Community Grant), the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund and Pullenvale Ward Councillor Kate Richards, and the Brisbane City Council Creek Catchment Program. This support, plus the immeasurable contribution from expert presenters and volunteers, is what enables us to offer this very popular event FREE to the community.

Dale Borgelt

MCGG Photo Comp Updates

Lovely to hear that Rebecca Bain, Photography Competition Co-ordinator, has been hard at work on plans for the 2019 MCGG Photography Competition. Here's more from Rebecca, updating us on the progress made by the Committee and sharing news of an exciting digital development.

Members of the Photography Competition Committee have been busy preparing for this year's competition, once again to be held in October. To date, promotional material has been displayed at the Brookfield Show and at the *Kids' Day at the Cottage* event.

We are excited to announce that this year the Young Persons category will be digital; entries can be submitted by email, and will be displayed on social media. Winning entries will be printed and will join the open entries on display at Kenmore Village.

Photography Competition: Save the dates!

Submitting entries:

Open entries: Saturday 19 October

Young Persons (Digital): 1– 18 October

Kenmore Village Exhibition:

Monday-Saturday, 21 –26 October

Prize presentation: 2pm, 26 October 2019

Further information and entry forms will be available in August – keep an eye out on our website and Facebook page. A big thank you to our wonderful local sponsors supporting the competition this year: Kenmore Village, Pisces Enterprises, The Pet Chalet, Dr Christian Rowan MP (Member for Moggill), Cr Kate Richards (Councillor for Pullenvale Ward), Kenmore Bridge Club, and Café Fiori. Happy snapping to all those hoping to enter this year!

Rebecca Bain

Fire Ready

Did you know that the Brookfield Rural Fire Service has a fantastic website full of useful links on how to be prepared, as well as providing information on planned burns and other fire-related matters (<http://www.brookfieldrfs.org/>)? This includes links to the SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium site. All useful when **ensuring your own home is fire-ready**.

In November 1968, a major local fire burned 12,000 hectares and took a week to put out. But it appears that a fire a few years before was even more intense. Alan Weiss recalls the Savages Road fire, where the

flames got up to 30m high, burning out a local dairy farm.

We are fortunate to have much better information and support systems now. But it is always sensible to be prepared, and not to be complacent. A long period between bad fires can lead to a lack of experience and poor preparedness.

Late winter to Spring is a key bush fire danger period in the catchment. This year it may be particularly important. The April rains resulted in a growth of grass that, if not grazed or mown, will 'hay off.' In combination with the drought-related leaf litter, this means we are likely to have a sizeable reserve of potential fuel.

So why not have a good look around *your* property to see what *you* can do to reduce the likelihood of fire? Take some time to review the useful local reference information, and make sure everyone in your home knows what action to take if there is a local bushfire.

Ed Frazer

Seeds: Native Willow Primrose

Native Willow Primrose (*Ludwigia octovalvis*) is a native shrub which is not uncommon along our creeks, generally appearing to grow in somewhat open situations. It is a well-branched shrub growing to a height of c.2m. Along Moggill Creek it even survives in infestations of Embu panic. It flowers throughout the year, flowers having four rounded yellow petals 5–17mm long. The fruit develops within the elongated calyx tube, being up to 45mm long and narrow (2–8mm wide), splitting at maturity to release numerous tiny seeds less than 0.5mm in diameter. We have



recently been collecting seed and — all being well — plants should be available in the not-too-distant future for those members with ponds on their properties (or for those living on creek margins).

L. octovalvis (pictured, above) also occurs in NSW, WA and the NT. Internet sources state that 'its native

distribution is unclear,' as it is also found in the Americas, South-East Asia and West Africa.

In contrast, *L. peruviana* is an exotic, notifiable weed species (category 1), naturalised in parts of coastal NSW but native to Central and South America. Under State legislation it is a prohibited invasive species and is not known to occur in Queensland. The weed may be distinguished by its fruit, being 4-angled in cross section and 10-25mm long — in contrast to *L. octovalvis*, with fruit rounded in cross-section and 20-45mm long.

Bryan Hacker

Weeds: Molasses grass

Molasses grass (*Melinis minutiflora*) is one of several African grasses which are a significant problem in our catchment, three others being signal grass, Rhodes grass and green panic. However, unlike the latter two



species, no cultivars of molasses grass have been released for grazing purposes in Australia. It has no relevance for agriculture and is a significant environmental weed. Despite this, molasses grass is not a prohibited or restricted invasive plant under the 2014 Biosecurity Act.

There are several areas of eucalypt woodland in the Catchment where molasses grass is spreading. Because of its capacity to root from runners and form a dense groundcover, molasses grass smothers native grasses and emerging seedlings. The dense cover also burns readily, increasing fire risk where the grass is established. Perhaps uniquely, molasses grass may be recognised from metres away by its smell, this giving rise to its common name. Flower heads are purplish in colour, and are evident from April to June. It is important to control molasses grass before flowering as it seeds prolifically, the seed spreading by wind.

There is no similar native species to molasses grass, although another African grass — Natal grass (*Melinis repens*) — has similarly coloured flower heads. This species is not scented and flowers in summer, being a common roadside weed but of little significance as an environmental weed. For more, see our Winter 2005 Newsletter.

Bryan Hacker

The Younger Generation

Congratulations to Java and fellow Scouts for their work alongside the Kholo creek, improving the [Tyamolium Scout Campground](#). When Java first submitted this article, I asked for a little more information as background, which is also included. Items always welcome from *all* MCCG members.

Hi, my name is Java. I am a 16 year old Venture in the Scouting movement. I ran an environmental camp (Fri/Sat, 5-6 April). I've lived in the area for 12 years, and have been involved in Scouts since I was a Cub (8ish years).

There are several reasons for doing the planting. The main reason was to give back to Scouts and the community. The planting was done at a very popular campground for our Scout group, and it is one of my favourite camp sites. I wanted to do something to say thank you to the amazing Scouting community that I am lucky enough to be part of. The second reason for doing this Camp was for a badge in Ventures. The environmental badge, requires at least 10 hours' participation in a practical project, and the production of a researched, reflective report.



On Saturday 6 April, 2019, several youth and adult helpers planted almost 60 native plants along Kholo creek, in an area normally inaccessible to the Moggill Creek Catchment Group. The initiative was run by one 16-year-old Scout who received the plants as a member of MCCG. Two Scout Leaders came along (bringing tools and experience) to help the other seven youth volunteers.

On Saturday morning, a whole area of riverbank was cleared of non-native, invasive species, ready for planting. A tremendous effort by all those involved meant that the clearing was done around mid-morning. A total of 56 plants were planted on Tyamolium Scout Campground, along and around both sides of Kholo creek. James, the MCCG Member who recommended the plants, said "It's great to see the youth caring about the environment, and taking responsibility into their own hands."

Java Terry

We'd love to hear more about the work of our bushcare groups. If you'd like to see a picture or article about the work of YOUR bushcare group in the next newsletter, don't wait for someone else to write something. Why not take a camera (or smartphone) along to your next working bee, and send the Editor a picture with some information about the day?

Froggin' Small

There are a number of small, discrete frog species found in our catchment: the *Crinia* (the froglets) and the *Pseudophryne* or *Uperoleia* (brood frogs/toadlets) species.

The two local *Crinia* species—*Crinia parinsignifera* (beeping froglet) and *Crinia signifera* (clicking froglet)—call from the ground, respectively in a repeated high-pitch squelch "eeeeek" or ratcheting "click-ik." From snout to vent they are 20-30mm in size, and can be found in shallow water in flooded grasslands, with small clumps of spawn attached to grass. These species have great variations in texture of skin, being smooth, warty or with raised curves or folds, and the patterns of markings on their heads and back have varying degrees of complexity.

There is one known *Pseudophryne* species, *Pseudophryne raveni* (copper-backed broodfrog) in our catchment, and we might also have *Pseudophryne major* (red-backed brood frog). These frogs have high-contrast patterns and markings on their heads and armlets (the most spectacular being the corroboree frog [*Pseudophryne corroboree*], which is found in sphagnum bogs in Mt Kosciusko NP). Their natural



habitats are subtropical dry forests, creeks and freshwater marshes, where *P. raveni* can be identified by a dark black-red brown or copper back (see picture, above, courtesy QFS). The belly is a marbled black and white, and its sides are coppery-grey, with a distinct black stripe extending from nostril to hind-legs

(through its eye, and all the way along the side of the frog to the base of the hind legs). Males will let out a drawn out “eeaaaaak” sound from below cover on solid ground. The frogs have large eggs, laid in moist soil or in chambers excavated by the male under forest floor debris.

Uperoleia fusca (sandy gungan, dusky toadlet) is the only known member of this species in our catchment. Reaching 30mm in length, it is dark brown or grey brown, with lighter-brown variegations (or a uniform dark brown) on a slightly rough and warty dorsal surface. The frog has a pale triangle shape on the head, an orange patch on the thighs, and a pale yellow patch in the armpit. The ventral surface is white with a fair amount of dark blue/black speckling, and the flanks of are normally bluish in colour, giving it a dusky appearance. Males call (an “arrk”) during spring and summer, from the base of grass clumps close to the water’s edge of dams, swamps, roadside ditches or flooded grassland areas. For more information look at the 2007 book, *Wildlife of Greater Brisbane*. **Phil Bird**

Favourite Trees?

Trees have been here a lot longer than any of us, and with a little help from MCCG Members we all hope they will also outlive the current generation of residents. **But do you have a favourite tree?** Perhaps it’s the large fig in the park near Dumbarton Street at Kenmore (both size and shape definitely halt you in your tracks)? Or could it be the *Eucalyptus tereticornis* beside the footbridge between Creekside Street and Boyd Terrace (as Malcolm Frost observes, “it’s been battered but it is a delight for birds”)?

There are over 20000 trees in the National Trust Register of Significant Trees. The MCCG plans to build a register of *significant* trees here in our catchment. DO you have a tree that has meaning for you? **Please, take a moment to nominate a tree.** It may be significant because of its age or conservation value (a *veteran tree*), its history (a *heritage tree*), its size or beauty, or its ability to connect with you (a *notable* or *significant tree*). If you’d like to nominate a tree, or help us to create our register, please send an [email to the MCCG Secretary](#). We’d love your contribution.

Michelle Johnston

The Hoop Pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*)

Hoop Pine and Red Cedar trees are renowned for their stature and beauty, and were the backbone of the timber-getting trade that led to development of roads in our area. From c.1848, the timber was used to build

most of the houses of Brisbane, and many of these beloved “Queenslanders” are still standing, contributing to that special Brisbane style.

Hoop Pine was popular; an easily worked softwood with a straight grain, and many of the trees were giants. They were pulled out of the bush and carted by bullock teams along the dirt roads to the rafting ground (now the Rafting Ground Reserve). From here, they were floated downstream, along the Brisbane River, to Patterson’s Sawmill (Toowong). Many of our roads today—including Gold Creek, Savages, Upper Brookfield, Pullenvale and Haven Roads—closely follow the routes of the timber-getters’ bullock tracks. Today there are only a few old Hoop Pines still remaining in the district—notably at Smith’s Scrub, which is one of the few remaining pockets of the ‘Dry Rainforest’ which is prime habitat for the Hoop Pine. About 25 years ago a large number of Hoop Pine seedlings were distributed to various property owners in Brookfield, and some were also planted in public areas. The fine specimen in my front page picture probably began life as one of those seedlings. It stands proud in the triangle at the junction of Savages Road and Adavale St.

Ed Frazer

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Veteran Trees

I recently attended a very interesting *Arboreal Habitat* workshop organised by Birds Injured Rehabilitated Orphaned (BIRO). The Veteran Tree Group Australia presenter, Jan Allen, spoke about the ‘Ecology of Veteran Trees.’ Hollows in trees are crucial to provide homes for a variety of native animals and birds, including possums, gliders, owls, lorikeets, bats, and numerous reptiles. 200 years or more are required for trees to develop hollows that are substantial enough to support a variety of Australian wildlife. By that time the trees are past their prime, and typically have broken limbs and dead branches. As a potential hazard, landowners (or councils) often then chop trees down—which means that the number of trees with natural hollows is in decline, creating added competition for the remaining ones. Fortunately, there has been a growing movement to record and preserve veteran trees for wildlife habitat (for more, see: www.veterantreegroup.blogspot.com).

It is important to create a register of veteran trees. The information can then be used to help protect them from bushfires, infrastructure upgrades and urban expansion. A form on the Veteran Tree Group website allows individuals to nominate trees for the 'Significant Tree Register.'

BCC policy requires any large tree, if removed by a landowner or developer, with up to 10 smaller trees; but these take many years to develop hollows. One solution has been to provide nesting boxes (which need to be of a suitable size, and placed high enough in the canopy to be useful). However, a large diurnal temperature variation means that boxes are often less attractive than hollows. A newer approach has been the creation of artificial hollows in dead trees, or in large trees that are in decline (where the cost may be similar to that of purchasing and mounting a suitable nesting box).

Gold Coast-based Habi-Tec uses specially modified chain saws to cut the artificial hollows, and the company is starting to use the technique on healthy trees (where overhanging branches need to be trimmed). Instead of cutting the branch back to the 'collar', they leave a sufficient length of branch to accommodate an artificial hollow.

How can we persuade Council and individual landowners to stop cutting down veteran trees, some of which can provide ten or more hollows for native wildlife? The dangers imposed by falling branches are greatly exaggerated. I understand the chance of death from falling trees/branches in Australia is estimated at 1 in 2 million p.a. (mostly in the timber industry), whereas road deaths are around 200 times higher. People can be encouraged to stay clear of veteran trees by suitable plantings, signage and even fencing. If the technology now means that overhanging branches that are considered dangerous can be trimmed and sculpted to reduce the danger (and provide even more habitat opportunities for native species), we should try to persuade Brisbane City Council to do more to protect veteran trees and trial some of these alternatives.

Jim Pope

All Things Platypus

Members who were able to attend the MCCG Mid-year Public Meeting (Brookfield Hall, 27 June, 2019) will have heard a fascinating presentation on *Platypus and the Platypus Survey* by Tamielle Brunt. Tamielle completed her Honours program in Moggill Creek – looking at platypus and their associated habitat and dietary requirements – and her PhD delves further

into details of platypus populations in South East Queensland.

However, one platypus just couldn't wait for the MCCG Survey, and was seen at close quarters by Chris Burwell (*thanks again for sharing your front cover picture with us, Chris*). Gordon Grigg notes that "The occurrence of platypus in Gold Creek dam is not actually new, Frank Carrick worked on them there for several years, and sightings were common for years after we moved here 30 years ago. There was even a well-known simple seat made out of part of a log from which they could be watched. I haven't heard of any very recently, although there was one in the pool below the dam a few weeks ago, but when people see them, they don't necessarily pass it on."

One of the best ways of seeing platypus locally, and to ensure that each sighting is recorded, is to sign up for the annual survey. Details below.

It's a Platypus Survey Date !

Date claimer!! The annual platypus survey will be held on Sunday 8 September, 2019. Starting time will be **04:30 am** at the Brookfield Shop. The survey finishes at **07:30 am**, with a free hot breakfast and debrief at Brookfield.

All MCCG members/friends/family are welcome to volunteer for this annual snapshot of how our local platypus are faring. *Don't delay*. Please register with [Christine](#). Registrations close on Friday 30 August, 2019.

Christine Hosking

PS: Multifunctional Tree Guards



It's not just young plants that benefit from tree guards. I was surprised to find two paper wasps working on their nest, which was attached to the supporting stake.

Bryan Hacker

Moggill Magic: Mike Humphreys

Welcome to the first of an occasional feature, thanks to our 'roving reporter,' Ed Frazer, sharing information about the impact of our fellow residents.

Mike Humphrey's 1.5ha Boscombe Road property could very well be considered as a showpiece for small acreage property in Brookfield.

When Mike purchased his block, in 1980, it had very few mature trees, with prolific weeds along the creek.

Mike, who had just arrived from America, didn't know a Casuarina from a pine tree when he bought the property. But what he lacked for in local knowledge he certainly made up for with vision. With passion and determination, Mike educated himself in all aspects of local environmental conservation. 29 years later, Mike's property is a mature and practically self-sustaining lowland forest, brimming with native vegetation and requiring only minimal weed control once or twice a year. Mike is gradually thickening edge plantings, and planting along the creek boundaries, but really, today there is little else to do but enjoy a walk, admire the huge trees and enjoy associated wildlife which is attracted to his property.

Mike is also well known for his leadership of the Deerhurst Road Park (Section 12) bushcare group, where you can find him most weekends. The 6 ha. council-owned reserve is located between Deerhurst Street and Gap Creek Roads. It follows Gap Creek down from Kenmore Hills to Brookfield Rd at Deerhurst Street. Entry is from Brookfield Rd or Kookaburra St (off Gap Creek Rd). Little had been done on the former Gap Creek Reserve until the early 1990s when the Brisbane City Council (BCC) cleared it and planted native trees. A lack of maintenance meant the reserve was soon covered in Lantana, Chinese Elms and Ochna. Fortunately, Mike was involved from the start of the MCCG in developing Deerhurst Street Park into a real gem.

Mike works with a team of four regulars, and some additional occasional helpers, who look after weed control, maintenance and planting at their working bees in the park. Twice a year, they receive extra help from a group of 20 local bicycle riders—which allows Mike's team to get a significant head start on major clearing

projects. BCC, mainly through Habitat Brisbane, also offers support and advice (with plants, machinery, equipment, mulching, and chemical weed control training).

Today, Mike is widely considered to be a local native plant expert. Since 1998, Mike's own property has been developed under the "Land for Wildlife" scheme and Mike's passion, enthusiasm and success have influenced adjoining property owners to develop their properties along similar lines (with ten properties

within reach of Deerhurst Road Park under "Land for Wildlife" development). Many neighbours in the area have joined the 'crusade' to reduce their own weeds, with support from Mike when selecting appropriate plants. Mike's aim has been for Deerhurst Road Park to be a lowland rainforest, with a huge variety of local native plants. Emphasis has been placed on developing good habitat for birds, reptiles and mammals, and regular bird and fauna surveys have indicated that Mike and his team have achieved considerable success.

There have been setbacks. The 2008-09 floods damaged the creekside plants, and there still is a considerable way to go to develop enough understorey. But Mike aims to see the park achieve

self-sufficiency in another ten years—aiming to have the Deerhurst Road-side of the park as a peaceful, local botanical gardens. Mike also believes that there will also be a future need to encourage the development of the Kenmore Hills section of the park for dog walking, horse trails and bicycle uses.

If you chance to take "a walk in the park," the success of the project will be immediately obvious. The work of Mike and his team is certainly a blueprint for co-operation between residents and the BCC. Mike's efforts have not only extended the size of the park, but they have added considerable value to the adjoining properties, and to a sense of local community.

Mike Humphreys is a true visionary. Together with his team of helpers, he has made an enormous and lasting contribution to our local area. *Ed Frazer*



Picture: Mike raises seedlings of locally sourced natives for the Deerhurst Street project and for neighbouring properties (Picture: Ed Frazer).

PPS: Cottage Talks? Contact [Dale](#) for Details