



# Friends of Newport Lakes Newsletter

Autumn 2014

## Welcome

Welcome to the late autumn newsletter – and apologies for the complete lack of a summer one. The park is looking very fresh at the moment after the recent rain and with the drainage works almost completed. Even better, now the weather has cooled we can let our dogs off without the fear of snakes. Unfortunately we have a dog baiting issue (see story below) so do keep an eye on your dog if you let it off the lead.



The stepping stones (thanks to Manny)

## Dog Baits in the Park

As many of you will be aware there were baits left for dogs in the park at the end of April. At least one dog required surgery from eating one of these – meat with fish hooks wrapped inside. Apparently the dog is now recovering well. Hopefully this is a one off event, but please watch your dog in the off lead area.

The positive from this though – a few local residents and dog owners organised a fund raiser

to help the pet owner recoup some of her \$3000 vet bill. Despite the short notice over \$2000 was raised and importantly, dog owners took back the park.

No-one has been charged with this atrocious act, but police are taking it seriously and suggest that if you see any suspicious activity you call Crime Stoppers on 1330 333 000.

## Our new Sign

I have noticed lots of people stopping by our beautiful new sign on the western side of the stepping stones. As well as being very pretty, it shows many of the food chain links for the animals and birds in and around the lakes.

Over the school holidays it was graffitied but it has been coated with a special film that allows the damage to be (more) easily removed. HBCC workers very quickly cleaned the sign.

On a more positive note I've also seen groups of young people reading the information and following the food chain lines.

## Welcome to Sebastian

For our last two working bees we have been led by new HBCC worker, Sebastian. He joined council after life as a chef, followed by a degree in Environmental Studies.

We've had lots of children at our last few working bees, and Sebastian has been wonderful demonstrating what needs to be done and how to do it. We look forward to working with him more while Libby is doing other duties.



Sebastian explaining how to plant

## Two Apologies

The FoNL committee apologises that some members turned up for the February event only to find that it was cancelled. We had organised a bird walk with a representative from Birdlife Australia. However a Total Fire Ban day was called and neither Birdlife Australia nor HBCC can attend in those conditions.

Lorraine attempted to send a message to members and the signs were removed.

However a number of people did turn up. Christine, one of our committee members, led them around the park and some bird watchers from Werribee helped identify birds. A big thank you to both.

We had been unaware until this time that we would have to cancel our event if a Total Fire Ban day was called. We will add this to all our flyers and posters in future.

The second apology relates to some members not receiving emails. Lorraine sends lots of information to members from other environmental groups, HBCC and about various other events that may be of interest. She discovered that some names were dropping off her list – we haven't figured out why – but it has now been remedied.

## Changes to FoNL Rules

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Consumer Affairs Victoria told us that we did not include two required sections in our new rules. After liaising with them, we have accepted that we must include 2 of the model rules to cover this omission. I have included these below. We do not have to resubmit our rules to them.



The storm water outlet into the north lake

They explained that the Definitions section is not technically part of the rules and hence a quorum was not

adequately defined. The second problem was that the rules did not explicitly state that voting by proxy was not accepted. Rule 20 (2) states that all votes shall be given in person but this was deemed to be insufficient.

## Around the Lakes

Finally the work on the storm water outlet into the north lake is almost complete. The drain is almost finished but is yet to be connected. When this does happen, it will help with the salinity of the lakes – a major issue for diversity and health.

There is still some remedial work to be completed where the equipment has been stored. This work will be carried out over the next few months.

A few years ago FoNL paid for four tree signs. The plaque on each, which includes both the common and Latin names, are embedded in large bluestone slabs. Council have now installed more tree signs including one on the Cork Oak at the northern end of the Aboretum.

## Night Camera

Mary has now taken possession of the night camera, thanks to the successful grant application. So far she has managed to only capture feral animals – cats, foxes and mice. She is hoping that some natives will investigate the 'bait' – without putting themselves in danger from the cats and foxes. I will keep you posted.

## Newport Community Choir

The Newport Community Choir surprised the FoNL workers at our May planting event by providing wonderful music at the end. (See the pictures in this newsletter.)

As well as recognising and thanking FoNL, the event marked World Migratory Bird Day 2014. The choir sang a number of songs around the theme of birds, migration and being welcomed. Songs from Polynesia and the Yorta Yorta people were included. It was a wonderful end to a productive and fun morning.



The Community Choir arriving

The Newport Community Choir is part of Newport's thriving Fiddle and Folk Club who organize the Bush Dance every March which is held in the Amphitheatre at Newport Lakes. Information about them can be found on their website: <http://www.nffc.org.au/#/news/>

## Previous Events

### December: End of Year Party

Despite the atrocious weather (squalling winds and rain) we had a great night at our end of year get together. A very big thank you to Mary who opened her house for us.

## **March: Clean Up Australia Day**

This year we had a great turn out for the Clean Up Australia Day event. We collected about 12 bags of rubbish.



Young ones helping in May

## **April: Mulching and Weeding**

More than 20 people turned out for our April working bee. We managed to spread quite a lot of mulch at the northern end of the Arboretum and along the verges of the centre road. It was particularly pleasing to see a number of children and teenagers join us.

## **May: Mothers Day Planting**

We also had a great turn out for our May planting working bee. This fell on Mothers Day and we had a number of parents with their children. This included two Cubs and a Joey from the 1<sup>st</sup> Point Cook Scout Group.



The Newport Community Choir

We planted over 200 trees and shrubs beside the western track of the north west plain.

## **Only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun**

**a Short Story by Sue Wright**

Oozing, grey sky, black clouds racing – I open a good book by the blazing fire. A sharp stab of light from the sundrenched window generates midday restlessness. Should I chance a walk? In the park serenity reigns, no visitors not even a child or dog. The moist air tints the gum-bark in rainbow colours, easing the gloom.

A dark, lonely lake, no diving birds nor squabbling ducks, just two patches of black flotsam – but look, it's a pair of swans! They hide their graceful heads under warm, fluffy feathers.

The showers return and I continue singing in the rain.

## **Your input**

If you have a photo from the lakes, or a story you'd like to contribute, please send it to [friendsofnewportlakes@yahoo.com.au](mailto:friendsofnewportlakes@yahoo.com.au)

## **FoNL Website**

Keep up to date with events and news at our website: [www.friendsofnewportlakes.com](http://www.friendsofnewportlakes.com)

## **Events for 2014**

**June 8:** Planting

**July 13:**

**August 10:** Planting

**September 14:** Mulching and weeding

**October:** End of year event sponsored by HBCC for Friends volunteers

**November:** Mulching and weeding

**December:** End of year get together



May working bee

## **Contact**

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## **The 2012-13 Committee**

**President:** Lorraine Harrison

**Secretary:** Mary Burbidge

**Treasurer:** Ron Bowman

**Publicity:** Gai Mooney

**Ordinary members:**

Christine Weller

Sue Wright