

Murrindindi Climate Network News July 2010

MCN has had a very busy 1st half of 2010, so busy that we cannot believe it is already July! Lots to catch up on in this July 2010 edition of the Newsletter.

MCN 2010/11 MEMBERSHIP

The new financial year is here and so is the time to renew your membership with MCN. We have a special early bird offer: get a new member to sign up and your annual membership is only \$10 instead of \$15. A membership form is available on our website at:

www.murrindindiclimatenetwork.org.au

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING WORKSHOP SERIES

MCN in partnership with the Moreland Energy Foundation, Ltd. and with support from Sustainability Victoria hosted a series of sustainable building workshops to provide information on the different options available for rebuilding after the fires. The final of the series was held the 13 March at the Kinglake Community Centre. The theme for the day was domestic water use and wastewater treatment.



Stuart McQuire of Green Makeover showed us how any home can be made into a super-efficient, energy creating, water saving, food growing island of independence – take a look at www.greenmakeover.com.au

Matt Parsons, Manager of Development and Environmental Services at MSC, discussed the How, Why and What of “waste” water treatment systems and a number of manufacturers were on hand to explain how their different products work. Essentially, most modern “water treatment packages” incorporate a standard septic system (a single chamber divided by a partition called a “baffle” that holds solids on one side and allowing liquids to pass out the other) with an additional aerated chamber. More advanced systems will have a third process that kills any remaining pathogens using chemicals or ultraviolet light. The level of treatment will determine how the treated water can be reused in your garden. An alternate “package” was demonstrated by A&A worm farms, a complete water treatment system that processes all of a household’s kitchen and garden waste as well as paper, cardboard and effluent!

A big thank you to Sustainability Victoria for helping us to make these workshops happen.



WATER EXPO

The Sustainable Building Workshop in Kinglake was part of a 2-day Water Expo that MCN put on in partnership with KANDO. The 2nd day forum was supported by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Sustainability Victoria, and Cr Sally Abbott Smith, who holds the Portfolio for Climate Change & Natural Environment at Murrindindi Shire Council.

On day 2 we were privileged to have a group of world-renowned water experts come from across Australia to discuss Kinglake’s strengths and vulnerabilities within the wider Australian water system and in the contexts of bushfire and climate change. These were Simon Cowan, Manager of Groundwater from Goulburn Murray Water; Juliet LeFeuvre, Healthy Rivers Campaign Manager for Environment

Bernard Eddy from the Australian Water Network; Jason Alexandra who has worked for a wide range of ngo, government and private sector environmental research and policy, sustainable land-use and natural resources management; and Dr Richard Evans, Principal Hydrogeologist at Sinclair Knight Merz Consulting. Day 2 was moderated by former MSC Mayor, Lyn Gunter.

Each of the speakers reminded us of the challenges facing Australian river systems, irrigators and urban water supplies. Participants engaged the presenters to discuss with vigour the tensions between environmental, domestic and commercial water uses, together with the complexities of water governance at local, catchment, state and national levels.

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While their views and perspectives were different, the advice of the expert panel to the Kinglake Ranges communities was shared: the Kinglake Ranges with its high rainfall and high quality surface and groundwater system is a valuable water rich community.

Each panel member stressed the point that Kinglake Ranges citizens need to decide together how local water resources should be best used, and include our water aspirations in an integrated vision for Kinglake Ranges. We should also embed ground and surface water use stewardship and governance, food production, land-use and community development as central planks in the Kinglake Ranges Masterplan.

Garden', who talked about "The Edible Garden" and regaled us with examples of some colorful characters and their equally colorful gardens. Sue McNair of the MSC also provided a brief update on PlantAid and an extensive overview of the Invasive Weed Control Program she has been running to combat the invasive weed problem in the Shire.

To find out more about the KANDO Water Action Group, to receive a copy of the (amateur) DVD and presentations of the day & join the email discussions on water issues please contact kinglake.kando@gmail.com or phone Vicki Ruhr 0488 978 033

To get a copy of the presentations for the 'Managing Your Patch' workshop email your request to: info@murrindindiclimatenetwork.org.au



Vasili meets the 2009 Australian Gardener of the Year, local Taggerty resident Eva Jellinik (photo courtesy of Julia Foletta)

FARM & NRM WORKSHOPS: PASTURE, GARDEN, BUSH - MANAGING YOUR PATCH

On the 17th April in Buxton, MCN ran a full day workshop as part of a Farming and Natural Resource Management Workshop Series funded by the Goulburn Broken CMA and Regional Development Victoria. The morning session focused on soil health and regeneration after the fires while in the afternoon session we learned about invasive weeds in the Murrindindi Shire and how to have an edible garden. Throughout the day exhibitors were on hand to provide one to one information on worm farms, composting, community gardens, weed control, and biological fertilizers.

In the morning the line up of expert speakers included Tim Ekberg of Farminganswers who presented "Productive Pasture from Healthy Soils"; Cathy Botta, Soil Scientist discussed "Understanding Soil Carbon"; and Peter Mitchell & Jim Begley of DPI informed us on how the local bush is recovering after the fires. The afternoon featured special guest speaker, Vasili from the popular TV show 'Vasili's

MARYSVILLE SUSTAINABILITY EXPO

On the 28th of March somewhere between 600-700 people came to Marysville for the 2nd annual Murrindindi Sustainability Expo. MCN organised the day with assistance from Regional Development Victoria, the Goulburn Broken CMA, the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction & Recovery Authority and the Murrindindi Shire Council. The park next to Marysville Central was turned into a tent city with nearly

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Marysville Sustainability Expo cont.

40 exhibitors showcasing a variety of sustainable living options, 6 different presentations throughout the day, a dedicated kids tent with fun & educational environmental activities, the Triangle Arts Group memorial clay plaques workshop, and the Goulburn Valley Resources EcoVan.



The GV Resource management group EcoVan and their very popular game of 'Drains & Ladders'



Duncan Hall, MCN Board member and master builder specializing in sustainable design was one of the many exhibitors on the day



Etiko, a business promoting Fairtrade products, kindly donated a Fairtrade netball and footy to MCN, which we raffled off to the participants in an interactive quiz (answers could be found by visiting the exhibits)



The Goulburn Broken CMA and Upper Goulburn Landcare Network exhibit table provided info on catchment management projects and grants available to bushfire affected property (large and small) owners for land and vegetation recovery.

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New Murrindindi Shire Environment Strategy on Public Exhibition Soon

In 2008, Murrindindi Shire Council adopted its Environment Policy with a series of policy objectives under four key directions:

1. Protect what we have
2. Reduce what we take
3. Minimise what we leave
4. Share what we learn.

Based on this policy document, over the past year an Environment Strategy has been developed to establish a concrete implementation plan for Council for the next four years. Based on Commonwealth and State laws and related policies, Council's obligations are identified in six thematic areas, namely

1. Natural environment
2. Waterway and catchment protection
3. Land management
4. Resources use
5. Waste management
6. Sustainable built environment.

To meet its legal obligations and to address environmental issues in each of these areas, Council will implement over a hundred concrete actions specified in the Environment Strategy. It will thereby co-operate with other agencies, such as the DSE, the DPI, the Goulburn Broken CMA and with Landcare and community groups and individual landholders involved in natural resource management.

With Council endorsement on June 23, the draft Environment Strategy will go on public exhibition from July 12 to September 3 with the opportunity for interested community groups and ratepayers to make comments. For details look out for information in the Council section of the Alexandra Standard and the Yea Chronicle and on Council's website.



A highlight of the Marysville Sustainability Expo was the debut of 'Pans on Fire', the local steel drum band formed after the bushfires under the initiative of Rita Seethaler and with support from Regional Arts Vic and donation of the materials for instruments by VISY.

Changing the Dream

Two more Changing the Dream Symposiums were held in the Shire with 13 people taking the time to come together and look at where our planet is at, in the areas of sustainability, justice and fulfillment. It was a very moving and connecting experience as we looked at the state the planet is in, and then inspired and motivated seeing the amazing things that people all around the world are doing to contribute to make the world a better place.

It was a great opportunity to stop and look at the root causes of why; like the impact of consumerism and wanting more stuff, this uses more resources but does it make us any happier? Beyond recycling, op shopping and changing our light bulbs what are some of the ways we think and live that are impacting the people, animals, plant species all around the planet? There were some terrific ideas that came out of the creative minds present, like finding a co-op that could deliver bulk, non-packaged, organic products to the Shire, running these awareness raising programs at the primary schools, spending time with the person on their birthday/mothers day instead of presents!

The next Symposium is being run over two Wednesday evenings, 7-9.30pm, July 28 and August 4. For more information, please call Lee on 0437 341 290.

Future Projects

There are more Farming & NRM workshops planned for the 2nd half of 2010. Following on the interest in the weeds issue at the Managing Your Patch workshop, there will be a workshop on weed ID and control. This workshop will be in late winter to maximise its benefits and will be directed by Sue McNair, MSC Environmental Project Officer (weed focus). MCN will be partnering with the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network who have extensive experience in the field.

In spring there will be a field day on an integrated farm-forestry (saw logs, bio-energy and revegetation plantings) property in Kanumbra in cooperation with Goulburn Broken CMA Implementation Committee; DPI forestry department; and Trees Victoria, an association for growing trees on private land.

Our AGM is also planned for early spring, which will include a seminar on FairTrade and the presentation of the MSC Environment Strategy. Be sure to check the MCN website to find out details on what's happening.

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