

MCC's Executive Officer Attends National Landcare Conference Melbourne 2016

The National Landcare conference held in Melbourne on 21st to 23rd September was an incredible event with many like-minded people telling their stories that are so similar to our own. Landcare in Australia is a movement and that movement is gaining momentum with many young people now getting out and doing wonderful things in the community.

Pre Conference there were field trips around Victoria highlighting the good work done by Landcarers over the past 30 years of Landcare. I had the pleasure of attending the Coastal Bayside // Bayside Biodiversity Trip.

Westgate Park where rehabilitation work has been done by the Friends of Westgate Bridge. This 40 hectares of bush in ten distinct planting groups, fresh and saltwater lakes, lagoons and ponds, the majestic Westgate Bridge, the Yarra River, the passing parade of ships and the CBD on the horizon are just a few of the visual treats at Westgate Park.

St Kilda West Beach which has been developed as West Beach Natural History Area to showcase the original plants communities of the region. The Objective is to conserve and maintain the indigenous vegetation and habitat values, continue revegetation works and continue weed control in the area.

Port Phillip EcoCentre. The Port Phillip EcoCentre is a place where environmental solutions are hatched and nurtured. The EcoCentre is a not-for-profit, community-managed, environment group, providing a base for affiliate groups involved in activities that promote biodiversity, environmental sustainability and community action.

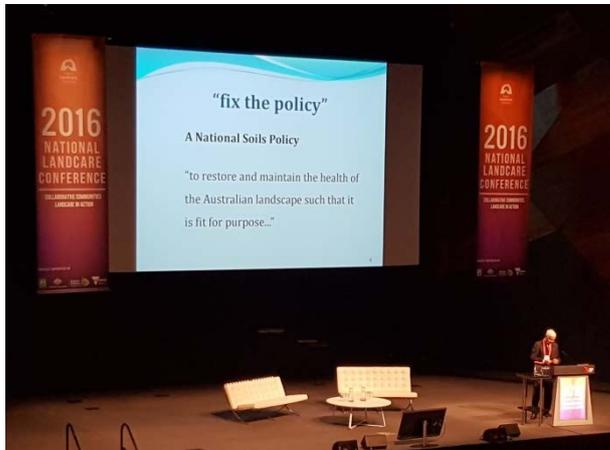


The Long Beach Trail. Connecting remnant native vegetation and wetlands across the landscape. The Long Beach Trail runs between Mordialloc Creek in the north to Patterson River in the south, passing by the internationally important Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands. A gravel bike trail runs the whole

length and is well-used by dogwalkers, cyclists and walkers alike. City of Kingston and Melbourne Water have already undertaken a lot of work to improve the natural environment, including many native plantings and the creation of Yammerbook Wetlands.

Conference

Costa Georgiadis, Host of the ABC's Gardening Australia was the MC for the Conference and kept us amused with stories



Key Note speaker Major General the Honourable Michael Jeffries AC, AO (Mil), CVO, MC (Retd) talked about our ability to adapt to Climate change and the fundamentals of a health soil helping with that change.

The Concurrent sessions were on Climate impact and responses, Community Engagement, Landscape Challenges and responses and Collaboration and Innovation. These concurrent sessions were presented by varying people over a broad spectrum of groups and businesses. We were giving tools on how to go about getting funding, how on-ground work has improved area or degeneration, how to use dung beetles to incorporate Biochar as a carbon sequestration methodology and many other helpful tools.

During all these sessions the importance of traditional indigenous knowledge was discussed and all landcarers encouraged embrace traditional methods where possible and utilise the knowledge of Tribal elders in their regions

The Corridor meeting place was well used to make contacts and get ideas for what may work for you. Presenters and attendees were willing to share their incredible wealth of knowledge and experiences.

The Conference dinner was a delight and I was proud to be a West Australian with WA taking out 6 of the awards at the dinner.

I must make mention of the Intrepid Landcarers , these remarkable young people have embraced adventure, chaos and creativity to inspire and connect young people in Landcare, these young people are delightful, bubbly and spark many new and wonderful ideas.

A heartfelt thanks to NACC for sponsoring me to attend this conference, by community people attending these types of events , brings enthusiasm back into the community and encourages more people to get involved with their community.

Helen Watkins

21th October 2016