

## Working Bee Report 23 August 2008

A damp morning, but perfect weather for our overdue planting at Costa's Block. Great weather for frogs too, and we heard some Common Froglets calling as we arrived on site. Pretty good weather for ducks as well and we saw plenty of them too.

FOOPS member, Ian Taylor had provided us with a selection of species for planting – mostly Gold Dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*), Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*), and Wedge-Leaf Hop Bush (*Dodonaea viscosa*) with some River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and Blackwoods (*Acacia melanoxylon*) for good measure. A small but highly effective crew made up of Terry, Nancy, Maelor, Robert Irvine, Claude, ranger Gerry Sansico and me (Karen) gathered to tackle the job of getting them into the ground. We decided that the place to start would be in the gaps between the 2000 plantings, some of which are now looking well established. In particular a clump of Gold Dust Wattles were heavy with buds and ready to burst into flower any day. I'm kicking myself for not taking a photo of them.



*New plantings among the 8-year-olds*

Given the recent rains the soil was quite easy to work and before we knew it all of the Tussock Grasses had been planted. We used some of the big wire frames that we made up in July to protect clumps of them. There is a narrow point in Jackson's Creek near the planting site where a small mob of kangaroos crossed during the morning. A couple stopped briefly seeming to survey the new plantings. Good thing there's frames around them.



*Robert, Claude, Maelor install frames*



*Nancy plants a Gold Dust Wattle into one of the "pizza trays"*

By lunchtime the majority of the planting had been done, so half of our party retired for the day. After lunch Robert surveyed the health of the River Red Gums we planted this time last year. Many more survived the drought than we had feared so Robert did what he could

to ensure they are all protected by frames. He also noticed that a little further down the creek, Melbourne Water contractors have been through and pulverised the last remaining patch of Boxthorn – a task that would have been almost impossible for us to undertake manually.

Meanwhile Claude and I wandered up the gully above Costa's to plant the remaining Hop Bushes. Claude's curiosity got the better of him and he climbed to the top of the escarpment to explore and along the way found a dramatic geological formation where the basalt has overlaid the sandstone. Unfortunately he also found some dumped car bodies. Will it never end?



***Basalt over sandstone***

From the bottom of the gully, we could see something at the top of the escarpment and wondered what it was. Of course there's only one way to find out isn't there? Climb up there and have a look. Turns out what we were looking at was a group of young Callitris planted about 5 years ago. So to make the climb worth the while Robert and Claude set to work repairing some of the tree guards (I just took the photos!)

After we walked back down to the flat I decided to head home leaving Claude

and Robert to plant the last dozen or so Hop Bushes.



***Robert repairs tree frame on Callitris...***



***...and this is why, the bark is being nibbled away***

