

Working Bee Report

22 August 2009

Karen Reid

A relatively small group gathered for work on a beautiful Melbourne winter morning. I arrived a little late to find that Nancy, Neil, Maelor and Andrew had already loaded one of the Ranger vehicles and were all set to head down to Costas. (I always seem to manage to avoid loading the ute!)

This was our last planting of the season, so the group were determined to make sure every single plant left in the nursery made its way into the ground. There were two trays of mixed trees and shrubs, Dodonea, Eucalypts and various Acacias among them, and two trays of Lomandras.

As we made our way down the management track to Costas we encountered a large group of kangaroos. They briefly checked us out, but then loped off down the hill. We suspect they look at the trays of plants on the back of the ute and think “dinner is served”.



Andrew and Nancy soak the plants in water prior to planting.

The focus of the day was to plant trees and shrubs up the slope along the gully and the remaining Lomandras closer to the creek. Andrew took charge of the small auger, a task that was probably quite tiring but at least the soil was (by Organ Pipes standards) moist and workable. The holes it digs are perfectly sized for the forestry tubes so planting was surprisingly quick and easy. As most of us were planting, Neil roved around the site collecting empty tree guards to recycle. Before long we'd covered the slope with new trees.



The gully lined with new plantings

The next task was to get our two trays of Lomandras planted. A quick inspection of the Lomandras planted at our last working bee was encouraging. They are not only surviving, they seem to be growing. (Neil found one still in its tube that we had forgotten to plant – it was doing even better than the planted ones!) Most importantly the Lomandras don't appear to be on the kangaroos' menu. None seem to have suffered the fate that tends to befall the Tussock grasses – being pulled out of the ground and eaten whole.



Maelor installs a recycled tree guard

We easily fell into an enjoyable routine of task sharing. A lead person set out plants, followed by Andrew with the auger,

someone with the water retaining crystals, planters, a tree-guarder, and finally a waterer. We followed the creek upstream putting Lomandras close to the banks. Some of the earlier plantings here (from early 2000s?) are looking good. The River Bottlebrushes and Gold Dust Wattles in particular are thriving.

Throughout the day we observed some birds of prey surfing the breeze overhead. None of us could quite make out whether they were Wedgetails or another species.

When I left shortly before 1PM, there were about 15 assorted shrubs left to be planted. A very satisfying day.

