

## **Working Bee Report October 2010 – Neil Duncan**

It was a drizzly morning as I arrived to see Maelor and Nancy sitting in their cars as the office was still locked as Hayden had to rush across to open up Woodlands. It seemed we were going to be a small crew but then Claude came to be soon followed by the Sunbury mob (Kevin, George and Robert Irvine).

There was a box of plants waiting for us to plant (probably left for us by Terry) so we decided it would be a good idea to plant them as the soil was wet.

Tools and plants were loaded into my car and Maelor and Nancy took a lift as the others walked down.

The track to the planting sites has almost disappeared under the mustard weed which has sprung up in giant proportions all over the park.



### **Mustard weed hides the track**

The planting sites were almost unrecognisable as the weeds had grown over a meter in the month. Luckily the plants had also settled in and looked good.

I took a trip across to look at our own fence site and was dismayed to find most of the plants had been eaten away despite the fence looking in good condition.

On returning to the work at hand we set about clearing the mass of weeds and planting the new plants. Having seen the destruction in our plot but the surviving plants in the existing plots I thought perhaps the weeds were hiding the plants from the kangaroos so I was a bit reluctant to see the weeds being removed.

Robert in the meantime headed across to our plot to put some frames around the existing plants and Nancy followed with some new plants to replace the missing ones.

George, Kevin, Claude, Maelor and I continued to either remove weeds or plant as the occasional short shower passed overhead.



### **Busy weeding**

Nancy came back as she had to go and informed us that it wasn't kangaroos eating the plants in our plot but rabbits had got in one corner and had a nice feast. The hole was plugged and hopefully made rabbit proof and perhaps the plants have a better chance of survival.

Claude and Maelor also had to go so Kevin George and I removed some of the orange tape and strung it across the plot to make several smaller plots within the large plot which seems to have worked well with the other plots at this stage. Watering was a tricky task as the grass was so tall you couldn't tell if you were on solid ground or not but eventually all were planted and mulched and watered.

Robert Irvine returned from the other plot and we sat down to enjoy lunch beside the plot as Kevin showed some interesting articles he had picked up from his trip to NSW.

After lunch we headed back to the office area and set about making wire frames to put over *Acacia implexa* seedlings that had sprung up through the *Allocasuarina* forest but were being eaten by the wildlife. It was quite a task rolling out folded up wire, finding seedlings and stakes to hold the wire in place. The more frames you put in the more seedlings you found but at 3pm we called it a day.



### **Robert and Kevin making frames**

I decided it would be good to have a look at the rail reserves and I was very glad I did. I went to the reserve near Calder and then onto Watsons Road but didn't go to Sunbury. Both were looking terrific and it is amazing how different the plants are although there is not a lot of distance apart as the crow flies (or train goes).

The main colour at the first reserve was provided by masses of Goodenia.



### **Goodenias en mass**

However there were Pimeleas, Ptilotus (pussy tails), Dianellas, and Chrysocephalum in abundance.



### **Ptilotus in flower**

Watsons Road was a mass of chocolate lilies, milkmaids, Stackhousias and Chrysocephalum with taller Dillwynias and Pimeleas scattered throughout.



### **Watsons Road reserve**

I would strongly recommend that if you want to see what the Keilor plains grasslands would have looked like before European settlement have a look at these two reserves in the next month.

**AGM on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November and Working Bee on 27<sup>th</sup> November**