

Working Bee Report – Saturday 28th September 2013

It was a blustery morning as I entered the rangers office after Tamara had opened up. We had a brief chat before Claude turned up and we looked around the now deserted office as all staff are now located at Woodlands. Tamara had to go off to do her duties so Claude and I got ready to walk down to Costa's when Maelor also turned up.

On the way down the escarpment we could see a mob of kangaroos bounding their way through the gate and then across the Costa block and into the Sydenham Park.

When we got to the Costa block we inspected the plots we planted two or three years ago.

The first plot that Gerry had planted up had some well grown plants especially the Wirilda wattles which were in full flower.



Plants growing well in first plot

The plot behind it also had well established plants but also a lot of weeds especially the artichoke thistle and grasses.

The other plots with the orange tape were a disaster with only the odd Lomandra surviving in a sea of weeds.



A beautiful sea of weeds!



Not much to be seen in this plot

We continued walking along the creek and were surprised to see quite a bit of planting had taken place presumably by Melbourne Water as each planting had been sprayed for weeds and were growing well. The plants were a mixture of wattles and River Red Gums. The River Red Gums had grown to the top of the plastic frames but had all been eaten off so they will need wire protection if they are to grow any taller.



Claude walking beside the new plantings

Further along the creek we came to the gully and hill side that had also been planted about 3 years ago. The odd gum tree is growing well and several hop bushes were nice and dense

in their wire frames. A few wattles had survived but not much else.



Hop bushes growing well in their frames

The next stop was the wire enclosure we had made and the result here was a bit more promising. Most of the plants in plastic frames in the enclosure were actually growing well and out the top of the frames. However we were not confident they would survive if we removed the frames so they remained on the plants.



Plants growing out of the frames in the enclosed plot – in between thriving weeds

From here we headed up the hill to what we thought was a Callitris as it was a dark green upright tree. In fact it was *Acacia implexa* the lightwood growing well in the barren stony ground.

The weather was still overcast and blowing strongly as we had a rest from the exertions of climbing the hill.



Maelor and Claude enjoying a rest on the hill

After a rest we continued up to the top of the hill and walked along the track which will probably become the access road once the overpass is constructed at the Calder Park Drive. Claude picked up a bag full of rubbish as we made our way back to the cars.

Overall it was disappointing to see so little progress in the fenced plots, but it confirms our commitment to building the wire frames as they seem the only practical method to achieve success.

At the next working bee there will also be a special meeting to vote on the acceptance of the model rules for our group.

Next working bee Saturday October 26th

Visit St Albans Rail Reserve to see what has come up after the burn earlier this year

