

YOU ARE INVITED TO BERG MT MARTHA'S FABULOUS END-OF-YEAR PARTY!!

SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER
Mt Martha House, from 6pm



Local jazz/blues group
STRINGY THEORY
will be back!

Bring some wine (or beer)
for the wine table.

If you'd like to bring a platter of finger-food (savoury or sweet),
we'd be most grateful! Let us know at info@berg.com

JOIN US AT BERG MT MARTHA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 19TH OCTOBER
Mt Martha House, 10.15am

Our scintillating speaker is
ecologist **Malcolm Legg**

Mal has just completed our 10-yearly
fauna survey of the
Balcombe Estuary
Reserves. He'll tell
us about what he's
found. (Go to



www.berg.org.au/flora-fauna-surveys/
& click on the link.)

**Stay on for a delicious finger-
food lunch. Then**

Join Mal for a **Walk & Talk** in the
reserves from about 1.00

Nominations for office bearers & committee

For nomination forms go to
www.berg.org.au/bergmm/wp-content/uploads/Nomination-form-2019-20.pdf. Nominations in writing, signed by
two BERG Mt Martha members &
accompanied by the candidate's written
consent, must be with the Secretary by
Friday 11th October

SEEN IN THE RESERVES

Sue Betheras was looking for
Orchids near The Bunyip when,
she writes, 'I found myself distracted
by these lovely kookaburras'. The Mt
Martha Preschoolers were also out
listening and trying to spot them;
they regularly watch out for this
family.



The wood ducks, Sue also reports,
have been selecting nesting sites in
trees. She took these photos
(right) at Uralla Bridge. 'One bird
was on the ground near me
and the other making a racket
up in the tree trying
to encourage her to
join him!'



COME SEE OUR RESERVES ON CANVAS!

Artists of the Peninsula Studio Trail
have been painting the Balcombe
Estuary Reserves. A collection of
these 30x30cm art works will form
part of their October exhibition at
Southern Buoy Studios. And

**10% of sales will go to
BERG Mt Martha!**



YOU'RE INVITED TO THE EXHIBITION OPENING BY BERG MM PATRON TERRY DENTON

When: Friday 11 October 6.30-8.30

Where: Southern Buoy Studios,
1/19 Carbine Way, Mornington.

The exhibition runs till 23 October.

SHARON ROGERS WRITES ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND ITS SOLUTIONS

Sharon Rogers, BERGer and local teacher who trained in Brisbane this year with former US Vice President Al Gore as part of the Climate Reality Project, gave an inspiring talk to BERG MM in August.



Al Gore has three questions on climate change and our future.

Do we have to change?

We are spewing 110 million tons of man-made global warming pollution into the thin shell of the atmosphere every 24 hours as if it were an open sewer. This trapped heat is leading to stronger storms and more extreme floods. The many associated threats include climate refugees, rising sea levels, ecosystem loss, infectious disease, and ocean acidification.

Can we change?

We've already started. We have the solutions to curb this massive problem *right now*. Technologically speaking, the answer lies in tapping into renewable energy sources, namely wind and solar, which can more than supply our collective energy needs. Economically speaking, grid parity has practically arrived: in most cases the cost of these clean sources of energy is equal

to, or less than, the cost of power from traditional 'dirty' sources (and costs continue to shrink as technologies improve). In many countries with no electricity grid we are seeing solar panels on grass huts.



The big question: Will we change?

As with all past social movements progressing us forward, change will come about only through public will. It is up to us to insist on switching over to renewable sources of energy – in fact, to demand it. Fortunately, as Gore puts it: *'political will is itself a renewable resource'*.

At the individual level, it's about personal choices and conscious consuming. At community level, we must change laws and policies. We need *top down* action and policy to address this. There's not enough time for changes only to bubble up from the bottom. *We* can solve this climate crisis. *We* have to be the movement for change and need to be united in our determination to create a brighter future.

Here's a list of things we can all do as individuals to make an impact:

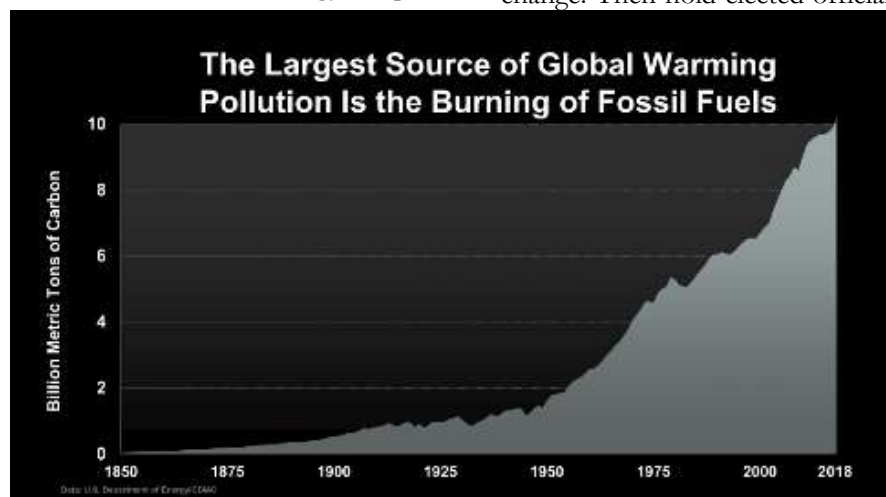
- Contact your local MP with your concerns regarding climate change.
- Speak up, use your voice, register people to vote.
- Vote for candidates with a strong stance on combating climate change. Then hold elected officials

accountable for their promises.

- Eat less meat, reduce food waste.
- Ride-share, use public transport, walk or cycle when possible.
- Use videoconferencing instead of business travel.
- Insulate homes.
- Install solar panels or choose a 100% renewable energy company.
- Purchase for quality, not quantity. Try to avoid single-use.
- Change your browser to Ecosia (ecosia.org). It uses advertising revenue from your searches to plant trees.
- Demand low carbon in every consumer product.
- Educate yourself, and others. Learn about climate change. Write about it. Speak about it.

Some great websites and resources:

- What's your 2040: whatsyour2040.com/
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: www.ipcc.ch/
- Office for Climate Education: www.oce.global/en/home
- Project Drawdown: www.drawdown.org
- 1 Million Women: www.1millionwomen.com.au
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition: www.aycc.org.au/



BE BLUE-TONGUE AWARE



As the weather warms up, **Blue-Tongue Lizards** are on the move, soaking up the sun in our gardens and on our roads.

Help protect them!

When Driving

Be Blue-Tongue Aware. Avoid any you see on the road. Let's reduce the numbers run over this year!

At Home

• Don't use snail bait – Blue-Tongues love to eat snails. Keep your animals away from them. Be mindful when mowing or whipper snipping.

Logo design by Celeste Tydens

ESTUARYWATCH

Bruce Ferres reports

August saw the estuary mouth intermittently open and closed, forced open by a build-up of water after heavy rain and minor flooding; or on occasion, by wind-driven waves during high tide. A few days of strong SE winds followed by even stronger NE winds combined to create a T-shaped sand spit opening not often seen here.



The unusual T-shaped sand spit opening observed on Sunday 25 August 2019

All test sites returned elevated dissolved oxygen (DO) levels, in August, possibly due to the green algal growth we've seen in the estuary at low tide for several months, perhaps in combination with micro green algae suspended in the water.

With increased rainfall, very high freshwater flows had flushed out the underlying saltwater wedge that we usually see at the rotunda jetty and oval test sites. Test results at both sites were consistent with rainwater (very low salinity, pH 5.5) at the top and bottom levels; but at the Augusta bridge site the salt wedge remained at a depth of 1 metre.

George Murley's drone video images offer a great opportunity to understand better the impact of sediment deposits

on the estuary. The dramatic images below are from footage taken 15 months apart, in March 2018 and June 2019, when the estuary water was very low. They show the Henley Ave stormwater discharge point, which was identified in the 2017 CAPIN report on the Estuary as the major source of sedimentation.

To produce compelling quantitative data on the rate of sedimentation over time, George will program his drone so that successive images can be *exactly* overlaid and the boundaries of the plume compared. This will also help us assess the effectiveness of measures taken to address the problem.

Oil slick

It was reported to me by a member of the Life Saving Club that a significant oil slick was pouring out of the estuary on 13th August. The strong smell and oily deposits on members' surf skis prompted them to contact the EPA who investigated but could not identify the source. This is a worrying development.

Musings on oxygen

Over winter, during low tides, the exposed mud flats of the estuary were dramatically green with algal growth. Like most other green

plants, these algae have been using dissolved carbon dioxide, water and sunlight to provide themselves with the energy to survive and grow using the process known as photosynthesis. A by-product of photosynthesis is oxygen which, in turn is used by microscopic zooplankton, water bugs and fish.

When there is balance between oxygen production (photosynthesis) and oxygen consumption (respiration) all is well. But in recent months the dissolved oxygen levels in Balcombe Estuary have been very high at all test sites. Perhaps the unusually prolific algal growth has been contributing far more oxygen than is usual, or maybe the oxygen demand has been greatly reduced.

By late August/early September, the algae were starting to die back and the once-green sheen on the mud flats replaced by the grey of exposed sediments and mud. This will have the dual effect of greatly reducing the oxygen being released into the estuary and significantly increasing the oxygen demand by bacteria and organisms that are actively decomposing the algal remains. So we expect levels of dissolved oxygen to reduce to more usual levels at all test sites.

September

Readings were done again at the end of September, when the algal growth had died, and there was no obvious micro algal bloom, with turbidity at acceptable levels, water not discolored, and no smell. However erratic dissolved oxygen levels suggest an equipment problem – to be solved soon, but not in time for this issue. To be continued in December!



Drone images of the plume from the Henley Avenue stormwater drain discharge point: Left, March 2018; Right, June 2019 Images by George Murley

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Contact: 5974 8565 or book online at www.completestep.com.au/book

George Murley proudly assists BERG MM with EstuaryWatch by taking drone images of the berm and estuary

YOUNG LITTER HEROES – AND SO MUCH LITTER

TIA & MT MARTHA PRIMARY

Mt Martha Primary grade 4 student Tia singlehandedly organised a Mt Martha clean-up day. She announced it at school assembly, put posters around the school and village, dropped fliers in letterboxes, and got the Assistant Principal to send an electronic message to all parents in the school community.

About 30 people turned up on Sunday 11th August and collected 55kg of rubbish, including 27 cans, 28 glass bottles, 23 plastic bottles, 40 straws – even 3 containers of sharps.

The 1997 expiry date on an old Coke can showed just how long it had been lying around.

Teacher Joelle Rubinstein said that the children were quite confronted by the sheer amount of rubbish and in particular, small plastic

pieces strewn so thickly along the edge of the creek. They felt they hardly scratched the surface; it made them realise the enormity of the problem.

LOCHLAN

Lochlan Smith and his mum Melissa did their litter run on the creek again in September, on kayak and paddle board. Heading up past Citation Oval, they collected plastic bottles,

polystyrene cups, throw-away coffee cups, even a pair of old thongs.

And fishing line. 'It's a shame they can't ban fishing here' writes Melissa. 'We see plenty of broken line and fishing hooks, some difficult to reach, often tangled in trees'.

BALCOMBE GRAMMAR

For the last of the four community service sessions Balcombe Grammar does with BERG MM each year, they too collected litter around the estuary.

Left: Mt Martha Primary student Tia at the estuary clean-up day she organised Photo Joelle Rubinstein Below: Balcombe Grammar's haul of litter from around the estuary Photo Liz Barraclough



FIELD NEWS

Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports

It's spring, the weeds are flourishing, and the year's time for planting is fast running out.

At the August **Sunday working bee**, there were just three of us, in feral weather, to plant and fence around lower Hopetoun Creek and the Rabbit Paddock. Our reward?



An amazing morning tea of egg and truffle sandwiches followed by moist carrot cake! Only bubbly was missing! Thanks to Edwina McLean for this feast.

In September, the Sunday crew planted seven advanced Swamp and Manna Gums and three small Sheoke and Bursaria in the old Soccer Pitch, to increase our threatened over-storey of large trees. The young trees were solidly guarded (from mowers) and isolated to allow protection from possum attack. In time, they will form a beautiful shady over-storey for this off-lead area.

The **Friday Group** weeded the healthy crop of weeds around the bird hide, planted Banksias and Bursarias in the Old Campground, and extended the protective fence along Hopetoun Creek below Balcombe Preschool. The **Coastal Group** weeded the verge and behind the fence from Yacht Club to bus stop, and weeding out Buffalo Grass ready for spraying and late planting.

The **Tuesday Group** sadly is winding up due to lack of numbers.. For its swan song, it tackled Rock Rose below Hilton Court.

Planting with preschoolers

Two busy and excited groups of Balcombe preschoolers helped us with planting on Hopetoun Creek below their kinder. One group joined the Friday working bee, the other was supervised by Debbie McMahon. The children planted some fifty sedges and shrubs in the narrow riparian zone where the Friday Group had extended the protective fence.



Balcombe preschoolers planting with the Friday group Photo Liz Barraclough

New grant writers on board

Many thanks to the four BERGers – Jock McMillan, Sue Betheras, Cate Clarke and Gordon Shaw – who have offered to help with writing, submitting and managing grants. We all met together with Suzanne Ryan and Tamara (Naturelinks) to get the process on the road.

Anyone else interested in helping with grants, please contact me.

Another grant success

We have been awarded a 2019/20 Victorian Landcare grant of \$19,981.15 to extend our restoration of Grassy Woodland (an endangered EVC) and Swamp Scrub at the

eastern end of the reserves, on both sides of Balcombe Creek.

WEEDBUSTERS

We finally ran our annual weed-buster stall at Mt Martha Village, together with Sunshine Reserve Conservation and Fireguard group, on Saturday 21st September, after cancelling due to foul weather a couple of weeks earlier.

The aim, as always, was to help locals identify weeds and how to remove them, plus ideas on non-weedy garden substitutes. Sadly, we had no trouble in finding stacks of weed flowers to display from the local streets! But we had lots of interest from passers by, including a number of membership enquiries.



Above: Liz Barraclough, Sue Betheras & Patricia MacLeod on the Weedbuster stall. Above: We start the weed education young! Photos Angela Kirsner



September Sunday working bee: trees into the barrow, into the ground, and guarded! On the job are Martin & Barb Thraves, & Ian Croker Photo Angela Kirsner

BUNURONG CULTURAL WALK

Lionel Lauch, local Indigenous educator, will take BERGers on a guided walk & cultural talk through the reserves, on Sunday 10th Nov (instead of a working bee). He will talk about Bunurong uses & management of the plants and local environment. Places will be limited –

Watch for the e-notice to register

BERG Mt Martha welcomes new members

Heather Boundy & family, Jude & Peter Scott, Olga Sewell, Tammy Warner & family

'A MEMORABLE DAY'

*Long-standing BERG MM member and supporter **Brendan Murphy**, sent us this reminiscence with his membership renewal*

...Stephanie Rennick organised a day 'bone seeding' at Arthur's Seat, inviting BERGers – very satisfying pulling them out two at a time!

At the end, I asked the Park Ranger 'were we winning?' He said 'No'. I can believe him – but one could say 'take that!' every time you yanked them out – quite therapeutic, but eventually fatiguing. One hoped for 'Plan B' – I'm sure it came along.

CONGRATULATIONS GILL AND JAN

Many years of community work by two good friends of BERG MM, Gill Gordon and Jan Oliver, were recognised recently when both received Mayoral Awards. These new awards, created by Mayor David Gill, were presented on 27th August.

Gill, for many years the moving force behind the Sunshine Reserve Group has long been a strong collaborator with BERG MM. This award particularly recognised her contribution to Mt Martha House and its history.

Jan, another environmental warrior of old, was briefly on the BERG committee, but for many years her focus has been the Mornington Environmental Association, as well as U3A Mornington.

BERG MM Working Bees	Other BERG MM Activities	Other Groups
<p>❖ Sundays: monthly, 2nd Sunday, between 9am & noon. Details emailed a few days ahead, or call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430.</p> <p>❖ Coast Group: monthly, 3rd Wednesday, between 9am & noon, location emailed a few days ahead or call Suzanne Ryan 0418 387 604.</p> <p>❖ Friday Group: weekly between 9.30am & noon. Call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430.</p>	<p>❖ Waterwatch & EstuaryWatch testing: monthly, 3rd Sunday. WW, meet 9.15am at Augusta St bridge: call Sue Milton 0407 350 175. EW meet 9.00am at the Rotunda; call Bruce Ferres 0435 389 804.</p> <p>❖ BERG Mt Martha Committee meets monthly at Mt Martha House, 9.00am, usually the 2nd Saturday, next meetings 12th October, 9th November. All members welcome.</p> <p>❖ AGM Saturday 19th October</p>	<p>❖ BirdLife Mornington Peninsula bird-watching 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Sunday. Enquiries to Max Burrows 9789 0224, mornington@birdlife.org.au or www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-mornington-peninsula.</p> <p>❖ SPIFFA 1st Monday, 7.30 pm, at Seawinds Community Hub, 11A Allambi Ave, Rosebud West. Enquiries 5988 6529, or www.spiffa.org.</p> <p>❖ Sunshine Reserve working bee 9.30am, last Sunday of month. Call Pia Spreen, 5974 1096</p>
<p>BERG MT MARTHA PATRON: TERRY DENTON</p> <p>COMMITTEE: PRESIDENT GRAHAM HUBBARD • VICE PRESIDENT PETER McMAHON • SECRETARY DIANNE LEWIS • TREASURER JULIE ZAMMIT</p> <p>• FIELD OFFICER LIZ BARRACLOUGH • COAST GROUP SUZANNE RYAN • WATERWATCH SUE MILTON • ESTUARY WATCH BRUCE FERRES</p> <p>• COMMUNITY AWARENESS BARBARA THRIVES • PHILANTHROPY BRONWYN STREET • NEWSLETTER ANGELA KIRSNER</p>		
<p>Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc. No. A0034645Y ABN 50 224 628 623</p> <p>Mail: PO Box 433 Mt Martha 3934 Email: info@berg.org.au Mob: 0447 160 288 Web: www.berg.org.au</p>		

THE CREEK

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