



The Creek

Volume 25 No 4, August 2021

Caring for our local environment

CARING FOR COUNTRY A NEW BERG MM VIDEO RESOURCE

Suzanne Ryan reports

What does ‘Caring for Country’ mean, particularly for those of us who work so closely on Country? How can BERG Mt Martha volunteers work together with the Bunurong to Care for Country? Are there ways for us to connect, to learn new ideas, different ways to manage the areas we work within? And how can the wider community be inspired to ensure that Country is cared for now and for generations to come?

Understanding ‘Caring for Country’ is the focus of a short video produced this year by BERG MM in association with the Bunurong Land Council.

Filmed on a cold and sleety April day, with umbrellas at the ready, Bunurong Elder Shane Clarke

graciously addresses our questions and more. Eddie Fraker, from Southern Exposure Media, was behind the camera and responsible for bringing our vision together.

A shared responsibility

The idea of the video arose out of the compelling walk and talk with Uncle Shane and archaeologist and heritage advisor Meg Haas in December (reported in ‘Sharing a Bunurong Perspective’, *The Creek*, February 2021).

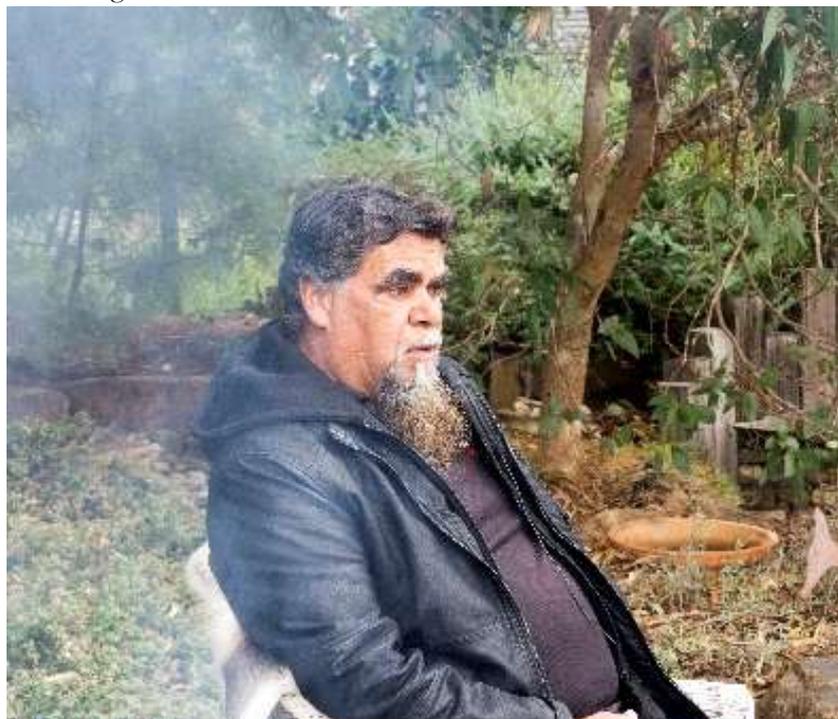
Uncle Shane talks about our shared responsibility for Caring for Country, a responsibility that is passed down the generations, with the handing on of this cultural knowledge and understanding. He highlights the importance of communication between volunteer groups and the Bunurong Land Council, and discusses various land management strategies.

An inspirational resource

Our hope was for a resource that would extend and deepen the engagement of our volunteers and our local community.

We are thrilled with the result and are currently rolling it out to our volunteers, our members and supporters, and the community.

The video was funded by our 2018 Coastcare Victoria Community Grant, supplemented by funds from the Port Phillip Eco Centre.



Uncle Shane Clarke in the drifting smoke from the fire pit, with Suzanne Ryan managing umbrellas & Eddie Fraker behind the camera, in Suzanne’s garden on 27th April – it was far too wet for the planned coastal location! Photos Angela Kirsner

Thank you!
Mt Martha Community Bank
Sponsors of *The Creek* 2021.

Mount Martha
Community Bank® Branch



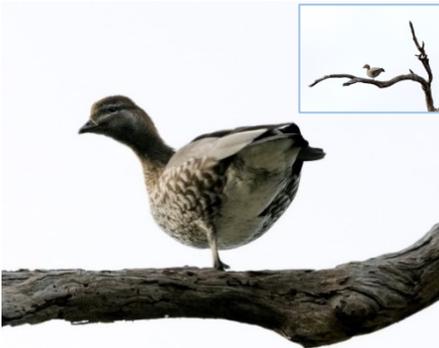
OUT AND ABOUT IN THE RESERVES *by Angela Kirsner*



SOME BIRDS

Left: The Bunyip has been alive with Eastern Spinebills doing aerial acrobatics in their hunt for flying insects, as well as supping sweet nectar from winter-flowering shrubs.

Right: Also in the Bunyip, a Grey Shrike-thrush – a wonderful songster with hundreds of different songs, but an unsociable habit of raiding other birds’ nests for eggs and nestlings.



Right: At the Maude St-Alice St corner, two Crimson Rosellas sat atop a dead trunk, one peering down into its centre with the air of a parent assessing potential real estate to raise a family

Left: Nearby, an Australian Wood Duck high in another dead tree, one leg tucked up, calling with her intermittent, nasal ‘waah?’ These ground-feeders also nest in tree holes – though this tree showed little promise.



Photos AK

AND LOTS OF FUNGI

Sue Brabender, a regular explorer of the reserves, had fungi in her sights in July as she walked along Balcombe Creek, camera at the ready.

‘There are so many different species, colours and shapes,’ she emailed, ‘and many are so tiny. Insects, Swamp Rats and Swamp Wallabies eat them.’ But, she added, ‘many are inedible or potentially toxic. I would not eat any of them!’

Her enthusiasm saw me follow in her footsteps with my camera and eyes on the ground. There was lots to find



Above: *Mycena* sp – a large genus of small saprotrophic fungi (ones that live on dead organic matter) rarely more than a few centimetres across. *Photo SB*

Coral fungi



Coral fungi range in form from simple or branched clubs to these large complex coral-like structures. Most grow on the ground, like both these; a few grow on decaying wood. Their fertile tissue covers all but the stem.

These two coral fungi are both probably *Ramariopsis* sp; the one above, possibly *Ramariopsis crocea* (photos: above SB, below AK).



This ebullient clump of *Gymnopilus junonius* ('gymn' means 'naked', and 'Juno' was the wife of Jupiter!), maybe 30 cm across, was on a nature strip in Mark St, off the bottom of Augusta St. Commonly known as Laughing Cap, Laughing Jim, or the Spectacular Rustgill, it is typically found growing in dense clusters on tree stumps, logs, or tree bases. Some subspecies contain the neurotoxin gymnopilin.. It grows just about everywhere that decaying wood can be found but is most common in moist, lowland wooded areas near rivers. *Photo AK*

Slime Moulds (not Fungi)



Slime Moulds are classified as a separate kingdom, Protocista – a dumping ground for a diverse array of organisms that are neither plant nor animal nor fungus.



They share some of the characteristics of amoebae and fungi. The mature fruit, called the sporangium, produces spores that develop into a creeping, slime-like mass, a plasmodium. The plasmodium behaves like a giant amoeba, feeding on bacteria, fungi and decaying organic matter.

Top: an unidentified slime mould (photo SB). Middle: possibly *Fuligo septica*. Bottom: possibly *Dictydiaethalium plumbeum* (Photos AK)



A couple of Bracket Fungi

Above: *Pycnoporus coccineus*, common but gorgeous! It occurs on decaying wood, this one on a Teatree log in The Bunyip. **Below:** Probably: *Trametes versicolour*, again very common on dead wood in woodlands and forests. Here, it had taken over bit of the path edging below Seppelt Avenue. Photos AK



Jelly Fungi

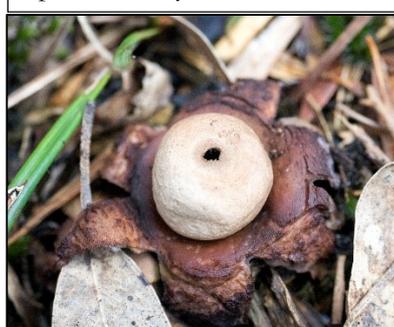
These both look and feel gelatinous, and are usually found on wood or as parasites of other fungi. **Above** is a *Calocera* sp, known as Pretty Horn; **Below**, *Tremella* sp Photos SB



Puffballs and friends

Left: *Gaeastrum triplex*, Earth Star, is common in forests, on rich soil or deep litter. There have been lots recently in The Bunyip. When raindrops hit the papery central puffball, it acts like a bellows, sending out clouds of spores.

Right: The aptly named Horse Dung fungus, *Pisolithus arhizus*, is back in its usual spot, erupting as a firm ball through the soil near the creek bank, in the fenced area below Seppelt Avenue. This one is young; its handsome skin will erode gradually to release the spores as they mature. Photos AK



And some unidentified strays

Note the caterpillar larva case beside the delicate little toadstools below. On the right, soft brackets. Below right: this was a little smaller than a golf ball, just emerging from the ground. Photos AK



ESTUARY MATTERS BRUCE FERRES REPORTS

ESTUARYWATCH

The estuary mouth has opened and closed many times over the winter months, and often when it has been open, seawater has poured into the estuary basin with the rising tide (see photo, taken early July), or has washed in over a low berm. Water levels have generally been high, causing minor flooding in the riparian zone and on several occasions, covering the rotunda jetty.



sensor hub. The hub will feed the data into a remote monitoring dashboard, which will be available to both organisations.

The team at South East Water will set up customisable alerts and triggers for any potential sewer spills, so they can quickly respond to anything out of the ordinary and avoid any impacts to the estuary.

We'd hoped the monitoring station would be installed in August, but lockdowns have pushed this on a little. It will be located on the rotunda jetty, the location that will best capture the estuary's water quality profile.

ON LINE SOON - 24-HOUR MONITORING

We reported in the June newsletter that South East Water had agreed to contribute \$17,500 to cover an ammonia sensor as part of our planned 24/7 Water Quality Monitoring Station in Balcombe Estuary.

We are delighted that, following further negotiations with SE Water and Bio2Lab Pty Ltd (who provide the technology and manage the data), SE Water have now agreed to fully fund the Monitoring Station for 12 months, at a cost of \$20,000.

With SE Water as a co-sponsor, we have applied to Melbourne Water for funding to extend the one-year time frame to three years.

The multi-parameter monitoring will provide real-time feedback on salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, ammonia and turbidity.

It will enable both organisations to monitor for contaminants in real time, via a cloud-based water quality

understand the challenges facing re-introduction of this fundamental food-web plant. If this trial sediment pin proves to be stable and provides us with useful data, then many more in other locations will be needed to build up a comprehensive picture of sediment deposition.

A SEDIMENT STORM

On Wednesday 14th July I noticed that Balcombe Creek below the Augusta Street footbridge was severely discoloured and carrying a huge sediment load, but upstream it was relatively clear (see photos below).

It wasn't hard to find the problem. The Augusta Street stormwater outlet near the pumping station was pouring a huge volume of silt-laden stormwater into the creek.

The culprits

This problem seems to have been brought about by a perfect storm of factors along Augusta Street: private earthworks at two sites on the hill, a poorly rehabilitated depot site used by sewerage pipe contractors, and road grading and resurfacing using gravel with a high clay-to-crushed rock ratio.

We have seen sediment entering the creek from this drain before, but never to this shocking extent.

A report has been sent to the Shire, with images, to register our strong protest at this very damaging situation.

THE SEDIMENT PIN

Low water levels in the estuary in July provided an opportunity to inspect the sediment pin we installed in April. As expected, the level of sediment has remained unchanged; this is a long-term project and readings will need to be taken over several years.



We know that seagrass can only tolerate a sediment build-up of less than 2cm per year and so it is important to

Right: 14th July, sediment-laden outflow from Augusta St stormwater drain. Far right: 17th July, sediment front downstream, below Ferrero Ovals. Below: A building site on Augusta St hill.



THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS

FEATURING

MT MARTHA VETERINARY CLINIC



From Drs Camilla and Josh,
Thanks!

to the local community for your support over recent times.

Meet our new Vet

Dr Kerrilee Luxford

'Dr Kez' (2nd from left in photo) grew up on the Peninsula & has worked in country practices & with Josh in Frankston.

Professional interests include skin, ear & eye problems & pet behaviour.

Her pets? - a large aviary of rescued birds! But she's looking for a pup to hang out at the footy club with her two boys.



6 Langrigg Ave, Mt Martha
Phone: (03) 5974 1199

- Bell's Meats
- Bendigo Bank Mount Martha
- Bonaccorde
- Boomerang Bags Mt Martha
- Bunnings Mornington
- Complete Colour
- Complete Step – Podiatry & Footwear Specialists
- Danckert Real Estate
- Master Movers
- Mornington Peninsula Gardening
- Mount Martha Chiropractic & Sports Injury Clinic
- Mount Martha Optical
- Mount Martha Veterinary Clinic
- Mount Martha Village Clinic
- Mount Martha Yacht Club
- Mr Curtis Wine Bar
- Proscap Landscaping
- Ritchies IGA
- Roberts Beckwith Partners
- Rotary Club of Mount Martha
- Sea Side Shacks
- Terry Bateman Pharmacy
- Volpino
- Warlimont & Nutt Pty Ltd

FEATURING

DANCKERT REAL ESTATE

BUYING OR SELLING IN MOUNT MARTHA?

EXPERIENCE OUR
UNMATCHED
CUSTOMER SERVICE &
PROFESSIONALISM
PAIRED WITH OUR
UNIQUE LOCAL INSIGHTS



DANCKERT
REAL ESTATE

www.danckert.com.au

EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT FOR OUR ESO PROPOSAL

By Peter McMahon, President, BERG Mt Martha

Thanks to all our BERG Mt Martha members and friends who responded to the recent Mornington Peninsula Shire's 'Have Your Say' Community Consultation to support BERG Mt Martha's 2017 proposal for an Environmental Sustainability Overlay (ESO) on the Balcombe Estuary Reserves.

The level of positive response was, we understand, exceptional.

The responses are now being reviewed by the Shire's Strategic Planning team, before being issued

to the Shire's ESO consultants for consolidation and report.

We do not expect further feedback until late 2021, but we will keep you fully informed of progress in this highest priority project to protect the character and habitat of our Reserves for future generations.

On behalf of the BERG Mt Martha committee, and more importantly, the beautiful bushland, flora and fauna that call the Balcombe Estuary Reserves home –

THANKS AGAIN
for your fantastic support!

WANT MORE ON FUNGI?

The Allure of Fungi, by Alison Pouliot.

A delightful journey through the culture, history & science of fungi

A Field Guide to the Fungi of Australia, by A.M. Young

A Field Guide to Australian Fungi, by Bruce Fuhrer

Australian National Herbarium website, article at:

www.anbg.gov.au/fungi/what-is-fungus.html

Fungimap website (Fungimap records, maps, advocates for & informs on fungi in Australia):

<https://fungimap.org.au/>

ON THE GROUND

Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports

Our field activities continue to leapfrog lockdowns and achieve lots. The Friday Group has planted trees, shrubs, grasses and reeds below Ferrero ovals, and weeded the area's tenacious Forget-me-nots.

They weeded and planted below Maude Street and, with our Naturelinks crew, assessed the patterns of regeneration following our various weed control methods, to inform our future management.

A massive clean-up!

Three Friday 'crazies' turned out in foul weather in late June to plant and weed on the narrow riparian strip beside what we've long dubbed the 'Market Garden', at the bottom of Augusta Street.

We returned here at the July Sunday working bee to remove heaps of accumulated rubbish: a couch, chairs, pallets, a mattress, plastic bags, bottles, a disembowelled beanbag chair and lots more! Then we celebrated with more planting! While there's masses of work needed here, there are lovely little indigenous patches along the banks.



During the grand rubbish clean-up, we found this Blue-tongue Lizard hidden under a rotting beanbag chair, among its stuffing – masses of scattered polystyrene beads. We collected and bagged all we could. Photo Angela Kirsner

Naturelinks in our grant areas

In the Hopetoun Creek reserve upstream of Bay Road, Naturelinks has been brush-cutting and spraying weeds among new plantings, tackling the invasive Rambling Dock and Cape Ivy. They have also tackled the regenerating woody weeds (mostly Boneseed and Polygala) below Victoria Crescent – a seemingly never-ending task!

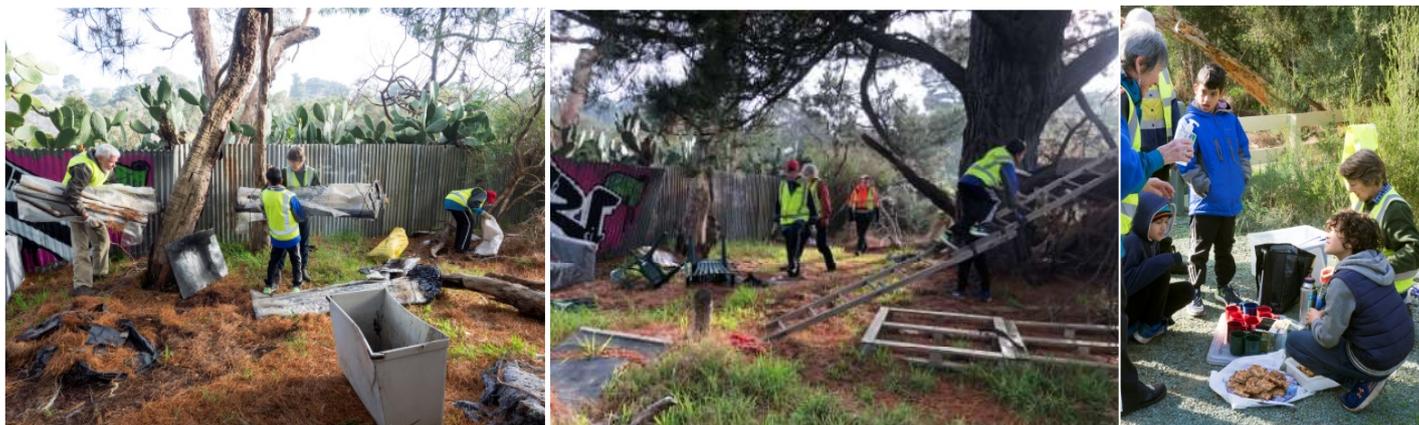
We thank them for also helping with planting when COVID has stopped our volunteer working bees.

Some wetland plants

In late July eight Friday Groupies, all masked, signed in and QR coded, tackled the damp area around the pipeline by the Uralla Rd boardwalk. We weeded out much of the remaining persistent Trad (*Tradescantia fluminensis*), plus weed grasses, then planted 150 tubes.

Most were 'ephemeral wetland plants' – ones that grow in areas that are intermittently wet: *Lobelia anceps* (Angled Lobelia), *Goodenia humilis* (Swamp Goodenia), *Mimulus repens* (Creeping Monkey Flower), *Persicaria dicipiens* (Slender Knotweed), *Carex appressa* (Tall Sedge). We hope they will replace the Trad, but it will be an on-going battle requiring continual, meticulous follow up. They are species we are not familiar with and have not planted before, though all occur in the reserves. It is a bit of an experiment, as we've had little success with planting other species in this area and the Trad has been very difficult to control.

We also put in a few drier species including our native *Clematis microphylla*, Scented Grousel *Senecio odoratus*, Native Raspberry *Rubus parvifolius*, and Kangaroo Apple *Solanum aviculare*.



The Clean-up!

Clockwise from top left: the mess, the cubby, the rewards (morning tea), the final pile, procession of the sofa! Featuring, variously, Colin Fryer, Liz Barraclough, Jackie Hartnell, David Barraclough, Richard Kirsner, Jenny Selby, and Nikhil, Kiran & Sachin Jhamb

Photos Angela Kirsner & Liz Barraclough





More videos in the pipeline

Suzanne Ryan has reported on the exciting new video on Caring for Country (see page 1). The next video planned is to be an introduction to and promotion of our wonderful reserves and BERG Mt Martha. Filming is due to start soon, COVID permitting. We are also planning more videos on individual weed ID and control, on indigenous planting, and on monitoring.

Left: a couple of the delicate saltmarsh plants planted by the Friday group.

Above: Angled Lobelia

Below: Creeping Monkey Flower (somenbat enlarged)

Photos Angela Kirsner

A MAJOR COASTAL GRANT

Suzanne Ryan reports

We have been awarded a 2021 Port Phillip Bay Grant of \$19,971 for work along the coastal reserve from Kilburn Grove to Alice Street, a strip of some 1.5km, covering 7.2ha.

In the face of climate change, we aim to strengthen this important strip of coastal woodland (mainly Coast Banksia Woodland and Coastal Dune Scrub) that protects the foreshore and dunes from erosion and degradation.

As always, it's to do with controlling the weeds and enabling indigenous species to regenerate, helped along by some enhancement planting, plus seed bombing and broadcasting. We will also be adding a few more temporary fence panels to safeguard the regenerating vegetation.

Importantly, the work will include some Cultural Heritage Site Protection, supported by training by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

WEAVING MAGIC!

Pia Spreen (of Naturelinks) reports

A number of species of *Dianella* are indigenous to our reserves, but we also have a rogue species, an invasive cultivar, *Dianella tasmanica*. It's in Hopetoun Reserve, threatening to take over, so we are gradually weeding it out.

But could these armloads of huge strappy debris be used, I wondered, rather than tipped? A phone call to Baluk Arts, the Aboriginal community arts centre in Mornington – were they interested? They were!

Juanita M, an Artist in Residence at Baluk, has transformed our rogue *Dianella* in her living sculptures, in which she also uses Bluebell creeper, Wonga vine, *Lomandra longifolia* and more.

Dianella is woven through the wonderful mushrooms shown in the photo at the left, with Juanita working on them (above). She intends that they will have Murnong planted



around them and Appleberry climbing up them.

What a stunning way to be repurposing some of our otherwise unloved weeds!

Check out Juanita's stunning work at her Facebook/Instagram page, Woven Culture.



Photos by Rod Pugh

GARDENS FOR WILDLIFE

Mornington Peninsula Shire's Gardens for Wildlife program is taking off, with training of volunteers now underway, based at The Briars. Five BERGers are among the trainees: Lynn Murdock, Jeanette Miller, Suzanne Ryan, Caroline Savage and Liz Barraclough.

Gardens for Wildlife, started by Knox City Council and since taken up for numerous Councils across Melbourne, is a wonderful complement to BERG Mt Martha's activities. The program aims to inspire residents to protect local flora and create fauna habitat by planting indigenous plants in their gardens.

The trained volunteers will visit home gardens, to provide residents with advice and inspiration in creating their wildlife-friendly gardens.

BERG Mt Martha welcomes new members
Chekam Bani Ardalan, Georgie Stubbs & family

BALLOON BAN

Releasing balloons is now illegal in Victoria under regulations that came into effect in July, backed by substantial fines. This is excellent news for marine wildlife, which can be seriously harmed or killed by balloons and their attachments. Floating balloons can look like squid or jellyfish, and marine mammals, seabirds and turtles often mistake them for food, or become entangled in their strings.

The EPA encourages people to report those who are breaking the new law to Zoos Victoria.

And instead of balloons? Try blowing bubbles, use floating flowers or recyclable bunting, paper decorations – or, suggests the EPA, plant a tree!

Come along to our Bushland Activities	Other BERG MM Activities	Other Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 2nd Sunday of the month: between 9am & noon. Details emailed a few days ahead, or call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430. ❖ Coast Group: fortnightly on Wednesdays, between 9.30 & 11am. Call Suzanne Ryan 0418 387 604 for details. Location emailed a few days ahead. ❖ Friday Group: weekly between 9.30am & noon. Call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Waterwatch & EstuaryWatch testing: monthly, 1st 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. ❖ BERG Mt Martha Committee meets monthly at Mt Martha House (or via Zoom), 9.00am, usually the 2nd Saturday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ BirdLife Mornington Peninsula bird-watching normally 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Sunday. Enquiries to Max Burrows 0429 947 893, mornington@birdlife.org.au or www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-mornington-peninsula. ❖ SPIFFA 1st Monday, 7.30 pm, at Seawinds Community Hub, 11A Allambi Ave, Rosebud West. See www.spiffa.org. ❖ Sunshine Reserve working bee 9.30am, last Sunday of month. Call Pia Spreen, 0437 299 847.
NOTE: ALL ACTIVITIES COVID-DEPENDENT		
BERG MT MARTHA PATRON: TERRY DENTON COMMITTEE: PRESIDENT PETER MCMAHON • VICE PRESIDENT & ESTUARYWATCH BRUCE FERRES • SECRETARY DIANNE LEWIS • TREASURER & BUSINESS PARTNERS COORDINATOR JULIE ZAMMIT • FIELD OFFICER LIZ BARRACLOUGH • COAST GROUP SUZANNE RYAN • WATERWATCH SUE MILTON • NEWSLETTER ANGELA KIRSNER		
Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc. No. A0034645Y ABN 50 224 628 623 Mail: PO Box 433 Mt Martha 3934 Email: info@berg.org.au Mob: 0447 160 288 Web: www.berg.org.au		

THE CREEK

Print Post Approved pp100003761
If undelivered, please return to:
BERG Mt Martha, PO Box 433
Mount Martha 3934

SURFACE
MAIL

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA