

# Enviro West



Western Region Environment Centre

*Western Region Environment Centre*

# **ANNUAL REPORT**



*A formal Welcome to Country from Wathurrung representative, Allan Browning on Tree Day*

**September 2003**

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# Board of Management

## Office Bearers

Chairperson: Bernie Fox  
Secretary: Linda Scott  
Treasurer: Barry Cooper

## Board Members

Brenda Cashin (Community)  
Lindsay Swinden (Community)  
Sue Hayman (Environment – Western Region)  
Jos & Helen van den Berg (Environment - Niddrie)  
Helena Medjumurac (Environment – Melton)  
Peter Hawkins (Local Government - Wyndham)  
Cynthia Manson (Local Government - Wyndham)  
Alan Brennan (Local Government - Melton)  
Trevor Sinclair (Local Government - Moonee Valley)

## Working Group Coordinators

Finances:	Sue Hayman
Tree Day:	Lindsay Swinden
Office Management:	Ray Humphriss
Internet Site:	tba
Newsletter:	tba

## Staff (Part time)

Director	Harry van Moorst
Ecological Footprint Project Manager	Joe Natoli

# Thanks to our Major Sponsors

Without the support of the community the Centre could not survive. We thank all our members and sponsors for their financial support over the past year. We hope you will continue to provide support in the forthcoming year.

In this Annual Report we pay tribute to our consistent sponsors. We urge you to support them.



**Melbourne  
Water**



**Moonee Valley**

*Rick Wolany*  
GROUP OF COMPANIES



## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Wonderful to see Joe Natoli around the place. His skills and enthusiasm are wonderful assets to WREC and his contribution to the perception formed by the Student and Teacher group of Wyndham and other western suburbs is much appreciated.

Our thanks to EPA for having the confidence to place its money where we said it could do a power of good.

Whilst talking of matters financial our appreciation to Wyndham City Council and Moonee Valley City Council for honouring their moral commitment to Environment and Sustainability with hard dollars and to Melbourne Water for their commitment in kind. Thanks also to Rick Wolany and City West Water for entrusting their commercial dollars with us time after time. We never disappoint and any more injections you may wish to make will be similarly well used to gain the returns envisaged.

Volunteers - many thanks to the long suffering and continuous contributors

Ray and Linda. They are both backbone and inspiration to WREC and their community.

Thanks to our membership and the larger Wyndham community - whether it be one of the largest "Tree Days" or turning out to our information sessions, Wyndham continues the traditions established during the "No Toxic Dump" days. Our challenge is to formalise our membership to ensure that opportunities to involve more people are not missed.

Thanks to fellow Board members - their combined guidance is much appreciated.

Look forward to WREC working through its 'governance responsibilities' so it is better placed to steer its way through the many challenges ahead.

Largest thanks are reserved for our Director - "Harry: very many thanks!"

**Bernie Fox**  
Chairperson



# SECRETARY'S REPORT

2003 has been environmentally a challenging and eventful year. The following activities are just some of the things we were involved in:

## **Wrec Office Location Changes**

During 2003 WREC has shifted location at Melbourne Water Administration building 2-3 times due to the Melbourne Water Discovery Centre building renovation changes.

2004 should prove a more stable Office environment for WREC and WREC will be advertising for volunteers – everyone has something to give! Any WREC members with building, gardening or painting experience should contact Harry - WREC would be most grateful.

WREC meetings will become more frequent in 2004 due to a stable Office environment (see Director's Report).

## **Melbourne Water Water Discovery Centre Opening 12.6.03**

The Discovery centre was opened by Hon. John Thwaites, Minister Environment and Water.

WREC met with Melbourne Water Management on many occasions to share our Ecological and Sustainability knowledge and to incorporate these ideas into the new Melbourne Water Discovery Centre. The Centre opened to the public on Melbourne Water Open Days Sat. 14 and Sun 15 June, 2003.

**Congratulations to all those involved – The Discovery Centre is a valuable intergenerational Environmental Educational facility.**

## **Wrec Discovery Centre Tour And Luncheon Frid. 11 July 2003**

40 WREC Board members, members from Moonee Valley City Council, Friends of Environment groups and

general WREC members enjoyed a guided tour by Melbourne Water tour guide and luncheon organised by WREC. A very informative and enjoyable day!

## **NATIONAL TREE DAY 2003 – Sunday 27 July 2003 ,10am – 3pm.**

### **New Werribee River Regional Park (first planting).**

The National Tree Day event is a highly successful community event and Werribee's Tree Day is proving one of the biggest community events in the State. Thank you to sponsors Rick Wolany, Melbourne Water, Werribee Banner, Parks Vic and Wyndham City Council.

Also a great thank you to all the community services involved: SES, CFA, APEX, St. Johns Ambulance, Music by Peter Cashin and his talented musical group, Music sound coordinator, Lindsay Swinden, Julian Menegazzo for provision of Truck performance stage, Face Painting coordinator.

## **Schools National Tree Day Friday, 25. July 03.**

Thank you to Melbourne Water tree coordinators, WREC Tree Day coordinators, Connie Menegazzo, Ian Boys, Ray Humphriss, Joe Natoli, Harry van Moorst and Linda Scott. This is quickly becoming a very popular environmentally aware and educational event. The students planted and prepared hundreds of trees, laughed, lunched, and learnt a lot in the most beautiful naturally stunning College Flats Werribee River environment. The weather gods were kind to us as it stormed the day before!!

## **Werribee Plains Vision & Melbourne 2030 Forums**

WREC hosted two well attended and successful round table forum events in the Melbourne Water Board Room – late 2002/2003 on the WPV and in early 2003 on the Melbourne 2030 Strategy.

### **Ecofootprint Forum**

WREC's EcoFootprint Project organised an Eco Footprint Schools Information Forum 27.6.03. A very successful and informative forum and a valuable start to the EcoFootprint Project.

### **Community Cabinet 23.6.03**

WREC members (Bernie Fox, Linda Scott, Joe Natoli and Harry van Moorst) met with the Minister for Environment and Water, John Thwaites and Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, Elaine Carbines as part of the Community cabinet meeting held in Wyndham. Issues discussed included Eynesbury planning issues, Maribyrnong River Valley events, Balliang Biosolids and the Melb. 2030 and Werribee Plains Vision implications of these issues.

### **Mathias Wackernagel – Eco Footprint Founder**

Harry, Ray and Linda attended a forum at Toorak addressed by EcoFootprint founder, Mathias Wackernagel. He presented valuable information about the reasons why, and how, industries, schools, commercial businesses, individuals can measure their ecological footprints.

### **The Melbourne 2030 Strategy And Wyndham - Forums**

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Michael Buxton – (RMIT University and Government Advisor).

WREC hosted this very successful public meeting attended by approx 50 people representing a broad range of interested residents. Informative discussion was appreciated by all those attending.

### **WREC SOCIAL EVENTS 2003**

WREC social events in 2003 have been difficult due to the number of WREC Office shifts.

WREC attended:



**Christmas in July at the Bridge Hotel in Werribee**, reception room, Fundraiser for Mary Gillett – a very enjoyable, fun trivia event. Congratulations to all those co-ordinating and attending.

### **Creedence Clearwater Recycled – Hoppers Crossing Social Club,**

A great night, great food, company, music proved a fun night!!

*WREC will advertise Social Events in the WREC Newsletter. WREC will keep events local and affordable to engage all our members.*

### **Welcome To New Wrec Board Member**

Helena Medjumurac, Enviro Rep. Moorabool Council.

### **Welcome To Eco Footprint, Project Manager**

Joe Natoli

### **WREC MEMBERS THANK YOU**

To all our dedicated and loyal WREC members, we could not ask for a better group. WREC members fight for an ecologically sustainable environment – congratulations on your hard work and commitment.

**Linda Scott**  
WREC Secretary

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The past 12 months have been both productive and frustrating. Productive in the sense that we have expanded our activities, partly through the employment of our EcoFootprint Project manager, Joe Natoli, as well as through the efforts of Volunteer Staff, Ray Humphriss and Linda Scott. They have been frustrating because a number of project plans developed in the previous year have either been delayed, prevented or altered fundamentally.

In particular, the plans that WREC had for the Sustainability Centre had to be substantially amended when Melbourne Water decided to take the development and management of the Water Discovery Centre in-house and to ask WREC to move out of the offices initially planned to be ours (they were needed by Melbourne Water for their own use).

After discussions with Melbourne Water a productive solution has been developed whereby WREC will have its own, independent building alongside the current building. There are substantial advantages in this for WREC and it will enable greater independence in how we operate, including accessibility.

The proposed **Sustainability Trail** is still being planned and has in-principle approval from Melbourne Water. Although there has been considerable delays in its commencement, largely due to delays in the finishing of the Water Discovery Centre by more than 3 months, we hope that significant progress can be made over the next year to make this happen.

Similarly, the work on the various hazardous waste committees has been both productive and frustrating.

The Hazardous Waste Siting Advisory Committee (HWSAC) prepared two reports for the Minister (Hon. Peter Batchelor) (and I prepared a minority report which differed from the majority in that I did not support Dutson Downs as a site for soil recycling).

Unfortunately the Minister decided not to implement the major recommendations of the HWSAC. While he agreed to promote the Dutson Downs site as a potential soil recycling site he failed to implement an EES or proper consultative process as recommended by the HWSAC. The other recommendations about how to proceed for the establishment of the Long Term Containment Facilities were also not implemented and instead the HWSAC was dismissed. The Government is now seeking sites within the Department and without community consultation. It is expected that consultation will occur at some stage, but the refusal to hold an EES at Dutson Downs has created skepticism about the Government's willingness to engage in serious consultation over this issue.

On the other hand, the EPA Prescribed Industrial Waste Advisory Committee (PIWAC) has slowly but surely managed to develop draft performance requirements for the Long Term Containment Facilities which will replace toxic dumps. This has been an extended, and sometimes stressful process where there was a continuing tendency to move back towards landfill technology. However, the final document (due for public release and comment within the next few weeks) moves well away from landfill approaches.

As in previous years, WREC continues to play an important role in providing the community and local groups with information, contacts, advice and resources. The Centre has provided advice and given assistance to groups from Keilor, Brimbank, Essendon, Dandenong, Deer Park, Balliang, Geelong, Altona, Melton, Point Cook, Whittlesea, and Hume.

### *Plans for the Next Year:*

Priority will have to be given to establish the new WREC offices and the surrounding Sustainability Trail. This will require considerable voluntary assistance from local and regional people who have

the skills and willingness to make this into a valuable environmental and community asset. Plans will be announced as soon as agreement has been reached with Melbourne Water on the details. WREC will also be seeking sponsorship for parts of the Sustainability Trail, such as the “History of wind power” section or the solar energy section.

The Ecological Footprint Project will provide a major focus over the next 12 months. The major element of the project will continue to be the Schools Project, managed by Joe. Hopefully this will be increasingly complemented by work on Ecological Footprint projects with local government in the west as well as industry and commerce.

At this stage it is unclear what the future holds for the Werribee Plains Vision, but it is likely that considerable energy from WREC members will be required to ensure that the future of the Werribee Plains is managed to promote ecological sustainability not merely economic profitability.

As indicated in the Treasurer’s Report funding has been reasonable, especially

now that we have a second worker in Joe Natoli funded by EPA.

The work done by the Board on issues of governance, structure and membership will greatly assist with developing WREC over the next 21 months.

Finally, to quote the (premature) proposal from last year’s report: “The next twelve months will provide major opportunities for expanding our volunteer base and training efforts.” The volunteer program was put on hold once more as we kept shifting offices and were forced to reconsider our role with the Water Discovery Centre. This is now clarified and we hope there will be a growing number of volunteers once we move into our own building later this year.

**Harry van Moorst**  
Director



## TREASURER'S REPORT

WREC can be pleased that for the fourth year in succession it has improved its overall financial situation. Although we are still unable to provide a full-time salary for our director, or provide any administrative payments, we now have a second part-time worker in the office (Joe Natoli) to ease some of the pressure.

Despite EPA's failure to provide the funds promised last year until late April 2003, the project has progressed well since its commencement in May. One of the tasks facing WREC is to obtain additional funding to ensure that the Eco Footprint worker can remain for the full academic year in 2004.

The Centre continues to raise the bulk of its funds from local government, in particular Wyndham City Council. Without this support the Centre could not have been sustained.

The amount coming from large sponsors continues to be limited. Nevertheless, WREC has managed to obtain the sponsorship of a significant number of organisations and businesses for both Tree Day and the forthcoming Ecological Footprint Week. There may be further opportunities for such targeted sponsorships over the next 12 months.

As also reported last year, the requirement of only a "peppercorn rent" by Melbourne Water has again greatly assisted WREC in meeting its salary and other financial commitments in full.

The accounts reflect this situation.

### Fundraising Program

In addition to the normal salary and running costs of WREC there will be an additional financial need created by the shift to the new premises. The costs of cabling and networking, renovating and painting of the 'new' building at the back of our current location will need to be met partly from our budget and partly from Melbourne Water funds.

Other major projects, such as the Biosphere Reserve Project, are unlikely to proceed unless there is additional funding to employ project workers.

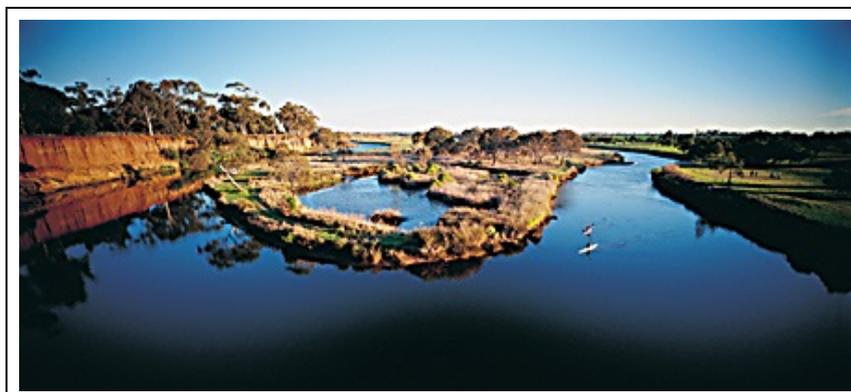
Although Wyndham Council agreed to be a part-sponsor, to the tune of \$14,000, for the Biosphere Reserve Project, provided that a further \$28,000 is contributed by other sponsors, this has yet to be enacted. WREC has not yet obtained the matching funding required, and further work will need to be done this year if the Biosphere Project is to be viable.

Once more we continue to be indebted to Sue Hayman from *Hayburn Business Management and Administrative Services* for freely giving of her time to keep the accounts in order.

Thanks also to Dr. Philomena Leung for again auditing the accounts.

**Professor Barry J. Cooper**  
Treasurer

*The Centre's accounts are attached at the end of the Annual Report.*



# Ecological Footprint Report

The Ecological footprint project formally commenced late in May when funding for the program was finally provided by EPA. In the previous 18 months WREC had undertaken extensive preparatory work developing potential curriculum models, finding resources, and contacting schools, Councils and supporting organisations.

Since late May the EcoFootprint project has achieved the following:

## Introducing schools to the project

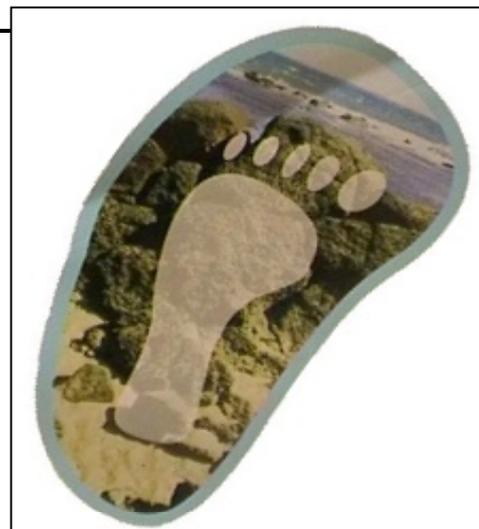
During June we introduced the project to those schools that had already indicated an interest. This was initially done on a one-to-one basis at schools and involved current school support structures – in particular the Innovation and Excellence program that WREC member Peter Cashin directs in the Werribee region.

## Developing curriculum support material for the program

The Ecological footprint program has an extremely wide application in terms of

- Range of target levels – years 4 -12
- Range of Key learning Areas (KLAs): Science, English, Mathematics, SOSE, Technology, Horticulture
- Depth of expected participation from relatively superficial to in-depth programs.

Essentially we intended to offer introductory curriculum materials to educate students about the principles of the Ecological footprint at their level of sophistication and within the time available for teaching. We then wanted schools to undertake energy water and environmental audits, again suitable for their particular needs prior to implementing an environmental project.



It was made clear that the project would be a collaborative exercise which trialed and refined curriculum resources, rather than presenting a once-off kit.

We produced a CD of resources for schools as well as hard copies of particularly useful units. This will be progressively upgraded as the project unfolds.

## Measuring the ecological footprint in 'real time'

At present there is no quick or easy way to see how much water and energy organisations are **currently** using and comparing this to previous periods.

WREC is negotiating with outside partners to introduce such a 'real time' monitoring technology. We expect that several schools and Councils will trial the unit in their operations.

We anticipate formally introducing the unit during EcoFootprint week.

## EcoFootprint Schools - Background

The project calls for significant curriculum, audit and project developments in 6-8 schools over the 12 month period. We also intend to involve extra schools in less intense activities and develop a network which enables schools to share ideas and experiences and encourage further ecological footprint activities.

Starting a new program in mid year is very unusual for schools. In almost all

cases curriculum has been decided at least 3 if not 6 months previously. In that context the current program was fortunate in its preparation but unfortunate in the delay in funding.

Instituting widespread curriculum changes in a school is impossible without a whole school review and major inputs from the local community. This means it is highly unlikely that a school will be able to simply implement the entire EcoFootprint concept – ie resource/waste, energy, biodiversity and water education and audits unless this has already been planned.

Schools that take part in the program will generally be implementing parts of the program that either

- 1) Fit into current programs
- 2) Can be adapted to fit into current programs
- 3) Are of special interests to the participating teacher

Ideally the six - eight major schools in the project will include

- Primary and secondary schools
- Local (ie. Wyndham) and schools further afield (e.g. Moonee Valley, Geelong )
- State and Private schools

### Schools currently involved

The following schools have begun to implement various aspects of the Ecological Footprint program:

#### **Hoppers Crossing Secondary College**

The school has a strong commitment to expanding its environmental education and action program and including these in its charter. There are a number of environmental projects that could be considered for implementation as part of the EcoFootprint program. These include

- Redeveloping a vegetable garden and compost recycling area which would be integrated with the Home Economics program

- Development of a frog bog as micro environment and part of science classes
- Regeneration of a Horticulture Centre as part of growing trees

Initial curriculum work has begun with a Year 10 Science teacher. Students will focus on energy audits and energy use in students' homes.

#### **Werribee Secondary College**

Two 1<sup>st</sup> year teachers with a strong interest and commitment to environmental education are working with the project to develop a comprehensive energy audit for the school.

There is also a Year 10 accelerated class which wants to develop a paper recycling program in the school and raise money for environmental projects.

#### **Thomas Carr Secondary College**

The school has a Year 10 Horticulture group which also studies renewable energy. We are looking at enabling this group to conduct horticultural projects as part of their biodiversity work within the EcoFootprint project. Work has also commenced on an energy audit of the school as part of the Year 10 curriculum.

#### **Mossfiel Primary School**

A class has been bringing together information for the schools energy audit. This is part of a wider school program incorporating a native garden and waste recycling.

#### **Williamstown High School**

Williamstown High school already has an extensive environmental program including their own Marine Education centre, excellent recycling programs and an horticulture program which grows plants for regeneration of local parks.

The EcoFootprint project is working with Williamstown High in a range of activities



- Support with undertaking an environmental audit of a piece of land which will be revegetated (with indigenous species) as part of the extension of the Jawbone National park. This area is part of the local foreshore.
- Offering advice along Ecological Footprint guidelines for a proposed rebuilding of the school. The Principal is keen to incorporate as many elements of environmental sustainability as he can into the new structure.

#### **McKillop Secondary College**

McKillop has a strong commitment to environmental programs. They are proposing to start curriculum units around EcoFootprint themes in 2004 and are currently developing these units.

#### **Williamstown North Primary school**

Williamstown Nth is interested in the program and has a close relationship with Williamstown High school. The school will be focusing on waste auditing, waste education and recycling of the schools (and communities) organic waste. This program will begin in 2004

#### **Ascot Vale West PS**

Ascot Vale West is working across 3 Grade 3-4 classes. They will be

developing water, energy and waste programs with audits across all areas. At this stage they intend to use funds from the project to focus on a school worm farm for their recycling and fencing for their environment regeneration project.

#### **Milleara PS (Avondale Heights)**

Milleara PS will be producing energy, water and waste audits. They will be focusing on energy use in particular and intend to develop energy saving practices and technologies as part of their EcoFootprint project.

Again this school will begin its Ecofoot activities in February 2004.

#### **Bellaire PS (Geelong)**

Bellaire already has strong environmental program. They will be focusing on developing a water audit and implementing an innovative water conservation project.

### **EcoFootprint Presentation Day for Schools**

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October WREC will be hosting a day that will bring together some of the major participants in the current EcoFootprint project to share their experiences and create some of the contacts and enthusiasm that are essential elements to continuing school environment projects.

The day will feature students and teachers already in the project as well as teachers and others interested in the Ecofoot print project and the broader issues of sustainability education. It will also be opportunity to highlight the EcoMonitor unit.

#### **Joe Natoli**

EcoFootprint Project Manager

## PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES: 2002- 2003

Below are reports covering some of the major activities engaged in by the Centre during 2002-2003. Once again many of the day to day issues and requests that the Centre and staff deal with are not covered in the following reports.

### “Werribee Plains Vision”

Last year we provided a detailed report on the status of the “Werribee Plains Vision” at that time. Since then there has been considerable work done but few public announcements of its current status. Below is a brief attempt to summarise the current situation as far as we know it.

The Government (or its Werribee Plains Vision development team within DSE) agreed to engage in further consultation and requested WREC to co-host a ‘round table’ forum to consider the various issues that environmental groups believed important in the future development of the project. This was attended by about 30 People from a broad range of environmental and agricultural interests. A similar forum, aimed at local government participants, was hosted by Wyndham Council.

The comments from these workshops (6 in all) were then incorporated into a report to Cabinet about the community responses to the WPV (this was published early in 2003). There was some dispute over the extent to which the environmental concerns were accurately reflected in this report.

The WPV Team also commenced the development of a draft business plan and engaged consultants to draft a “Sustainability Framework”. Some consultation occurred over the Sustainability Framework but little has been done to consult with the community over the draft Business Plan.

The Sustainability Framework could become a very useful document to guide development of the WPV along better environmental guidelines than ever before. Hopefully it will be incorporated into the draft Business Plan to ensure there are no illusions about the environmental pre-requisites for any developments within the WPV.

The draft Business Plan is due to go to Cabinet in mid-September and, if approved, should be available publicly before the end of this year. It is anticipated that the Government will then proceed to call for Expressions of Interest for undertaking some of the major projects identified in the Business Plan.

It is to be hoped that there will be substantial community consultation of the draft Business Plan **before** any Expressions of Interest are called.

As stated in our report last year: “The development of the ‘Werribee Plains Vision’ will probably be one of the most important activities influencing our future for many years. We need to make sure that the principles and objectives that WREC was founded on are strongly promoted through this process.”

WREC is continuing to keep abreast of developments and attempting to influence its direction. Most importantly, WREC has continued to press the WPV Team to engage in more community involvement and consultation. A proposal to enable WREC to assist with the community involvement process was presented to the Minister but has not been accepted at this stage.

### The Marina

WREC spearheaded opposition to the proposed Marina with its 18-storey twin towers. WREC argued with Council about the intention to sell land to the developer for this proposal. Council eventually agreed to sell the land conditional on the obtaining of permits for the development. WREC made it clear to Council and the Developer (and subsequently to the Minister) that the proposed Marina was

unacceptable and would be strongly opposed.

A meeting between WREC, Council and the developer in July has led to the developer agreeing to withdraw the initial plans, to develop a new proposal that will accord with sustainability principles and to agree to a full EES prior to any permit applications being granted.

WREC has been invited to meet with the developer in the near future to discuss the new draft proposals.

A public meeting will be held as soon as the proposal has been presented to the community or an application for the permits has been lodged.

### Land Use at WTP

As Director of WREC, Harry has continued to attend meetings of the Melbourne Water WTP Land Use Strategy Reference Group. This group has established a set of guiding principles which Melbourne Water has agreed to apply to any future developments on the WTP.

These principles, along with a broad outline of Melbourne Water's Land Use Strategy is due to be published later this year.

In accordance with the Land Use strategy Melbourne water established a "Horticultural Precinct" of approx 400ha aimed at 'show casing' and researching the use of effluent in agricultural/horticultural activities. Expressions of Interest were sought and Melbourne Water is currently negotiating with several of the applicants for a useful mix of horticultural projects on the site.

The proposed linear park on Melbourne Water land along the lower reaches of the Werribee River to the estuary have now been supported by the Minister and announced in the Melbourne 2030 Strategy. However, no budgetary allocation has been made and no formal steps taken to change the use or responsibilities for the park and Melbourne Water remains the

responsible body for the land until such time as the Government formalises the park.

### Hazardous Waste Update

After the hectic public schedule and debate over the soil recycling facilities last year, there has been a lull during the 2002-2003 period.

The Government received the two reports from the Hazardous Waste Siting Advisory Committee (HWSAC). The Minister largely accepted the findings of the site assessment report (which only recommended the Dutson Downs site as a possible site for a facility) but also accepted many of the reservations of the Minority Report prepared by WREC Director (who continued to be a member of the HWSAC). The Minister did not respond to the second HWSAC report which considered future processes.

Instead of discussing the process report the Minister, after a period of some 6 months, closed the HWSAC and brought the siting process in-house. The Minister subsequently employed the ex-manager of the Lyndhurst Prescribed Waste Landfill to work on the siting project.

The proposal to build a soil recycling facility at Dutson Downs is proceeding, despite strong local opposition. The Government has rejected the recommendations of the HWSAC and has refused to require an EES or to let the local Council act as the responsible authority. Instead the Minister has called it in, even before a formal application has been submitted. This process appears to be worse than the process imposed on Werribee for the CSR toxic dump proposal, and may further discredit future attempts to locate the long term containment facilities required in the next stage.

Another development in the ongoing saga of hazardous waste is the development of 'performance criteria' for the Long Term Containment Facilities that will replace the toxic dumps or landfills of the past. The EPA's Prescribed Industrial Waste

Advisory Committee (PIWAC) has worked consistently, if slowly, towards the publication of draft guidelines (probably available by the end of this month). Once these are accepted it will be up to Major Projects Victoria (Minister Peter Batchelor) to nominate one or more sites for the location of the facility. Expressions of Interest for the construction and operation of the facility will then be sought.

There is no public information available, but it appears that MPV has now located several potential sites between 100km and 180km from Melbourne.

Early this year VCAT confirmed the EPA's approval of an application by Sita at Lyndhurst for expanding its prescribed waste intake. Despite some local opposition and substantial submissions from WREC and members of ACF VCAT approved the extension as a 'temporary' arrangement until the Long Term Containment Facilities were operational. VCAT also agreed with WREC's argument that any extension should only be a dedicated prescribed waste cell and not a co-mingled (hazardous and municipal) waste cell. The developer was forced to make a last-minute 180° turn as a result of the objections to the initial proposal. However, the extension will now proceed in amended form.

## Ecological Footprint

The work WREC undertook over the past year to establish an Ecological Footprint project paid off earlier this year when EPA funding finally arrived. The position of Eco Footprint Project Worker was promptly advertised and 15 applications were received. After shortlisting and interviews Joe Natoli was offered the position. We are thankful that he accepted the offer and was able to commence work at the end of May.

Joe's report can be found elsewhere in this Annual Report.



## WREC's new premises and the Sustainability Trail

The new plans for WREC's accommodation involve the relocation of an old (but reusable) portable office building (a set of 4 ATCO portables currently located in Cocoroc) to the Water Discovery Centre building. The new premises will be located next to the existing building towards the back, with substantial signage to make it more accessible than our current location.

The building has now been tested for asbestos (an initial fear because of the cement sheeting walls) and has been found to be asbestos free. There will need to be considerable repairs done to the roof and guttering as well as interior renovations.

WREC will need to contribute to the work of renovation and repainting the building.

When completed we will have 4 offices, a small meeting room (adequate for up to 30-40 people) and significant storage space.

WREC will need to network the computers as well as establish other facilities to make the offices work efficiently. Thanks to a contribution from Wyndham Council we have several reasonable (Pentium 2, 300mh) computers as part of our equipment.

We will be calling for volunteers to assist with plumbing, cabling and painting tasks later in October or November.

Plans for the Sustainability Trail were put on hold until our accommodation was

finalised. It is proposed to re-commence the planning of the trail in early November with the aim of attracting sponsors and commencing construction early in the new year. This should be a very exciting development open to considerable community involvement in all stages.

An initial planning meeting will be held in early November and will be publicised as widely as possible amongst WREC members.

## Tree Day

Once again Tree Day was an outstanding success, involving more than 400 people in the planting of over 3,000 trees, shrubs and grasses at the area of the Werribee River known as 'College Flats'.

As mentioned in last year's report, there was insufficient opportunity to hold another mass planting at the Children's Millenium Forest (due to the flood mitigation purposes of the area) and it was necessary to choose an alternative site. Through the strong support received from both Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria it was possible to use the College Flats site for this year's planting. Hopefully the site will be available for the next few years and future plantings will greatly assist in the regeneration of this area.

The Government has agreed that the area will form part of a new linear park along the Werribee River stretching from the Maltby Bypass to the mouth of the river. Therefore any plantings and

regeneration efforts will be protected as part of the park.

A separate report on the success of Tree Day has been prepared which acknowledges the work done, the sponsors that made it possible, and the future plans. This is available at the AGM.

## Balliang Sewage Sludge

The Balliang issue has gained some momentum and media interest (the group is now referred to as the Hovells Creek and District Environment Group). Harry represented WREC at several meetings and has proposed a 'win-win' alternative which would put the sludge back at the WTP and would work towards a permanent solution rather than a temporary one in Balliang/Anakie.

In brief, WREC has proposed that:

1. the current plans (and contractual liabilities) be moved from Balliang to the WTP, where there is already a major sludge deposit which needs management and where the major problems will lie in the future, regardless of Barwon Water's successes at Balliang.
2. The 3-year project be regarded as a 'trial' project with appropriate research backing.
3. That Melbourne Water establish an "Organics Resource Recovery" precinct at the WTP aimed at properly researching and treating sewage sludge and green organic waste.

Through the efforts of WREC and the Hovells Creek and District Environment Group we have held several meetings with Barwon Water. A public meeting will be held later in September and we have also been invited to present our concerns and arguments to the Barwon Water Board at its next meeting. Meanwhile Barwon Water has agreed to hold off with its Works Approval Application for the sludge drying facility.

Hopefully a long-term solution can be set in motion as a result of our combined efforts.



## Maribyrnong River Valley

### Development – update

The MRV development has now been approved. Attempts to take it to VCAT failed (there were no 3<sup>rd</sup> party rights of appeal, which we knew, and the Minister was not prepared to intervene, which she has the power to do).

There is still a possibility that we could pursue a VCAT ‘declaration’ claiming that the permit should be declared null and void due to being contrary to government policy, etc. However, this would require some considerable time and legal advice to make it credible.

It is evident that any such appeal would have to be driven by WREC, and I’m not convinced we have the resources to do so.

The alternative approach appears to be to keep harassing the developer in order to get the best possible outcome for this stage (Stage 6) and to try to get a more substantial improvement for the forthcoming stages. There is still a major grassland and transition zone to be protected (this is in the area yet to gain approval and which will be subject to 3<sup>rd</sup> party appeal rights).

## EcoRecycle

Harry is still a member of the Eco Recycle Board. Meetings and strategy development continues on a monthly basis (and some in-between meetings and discussions). The “Materials Efficiency” strategy is now finalised and is reasonable, though still too oriented towards waste management rather than eco-efficiency. The aim now is to get it through Cabinet without too many further compromises. The Board has its final meeting in September, when the new Board takes over. Harry may be invited to be a member of the new Board but this probably won’t be known for at least a month.

### WANTED

#### VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH:

- Filing
- Newsletter
- Teaching
- Landscaping
- Research
- Internet
- Renovating
- Gardening

#### SPECIFIC VOLUNTEER POSITIONS NEEDING TO BE FILLED:

- Newsletter Editor
- Webmaster
- Librarian/Resource Centre Coordinator
- Sustainability Trail Coordinator

**Western Region Environment Centre Inc.**

*New Farm Road  
Werribee Vic 3030*

**Statement of Financial Position**

**As at 30 June 2003**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Advantage Credit Union 121377	19,648	5,657
Cash Drawer	300	88
Petty Cash	-62	
Loan to WVLMA		80
Co-op Shares	10	10
Debtors	2,200	743
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>22,096</b>	<b>6,577</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
<b>Furniture &amp; Fittings</b>		
Furniture & Fittings at Cost	1,450	1,450
Furniture & Fittings Dep	-448	-351
<b>Office Equipment</b>		
Office Equipment at Cost	3,906	3,906
Office Equipment Dep	-2,851	-2,382
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>2,058</b>	<b>2,623</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>24,154</b>	<b>9,201</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Monies Due (Creditors)	890	3,501
Unspent Grants to be returned		487
Grants in Advance (Ecological Footprint)	9,500	
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>10,390</b>	<b>3,988</b>

<b>Tax Liabilities</b>		
GST Collected	200	-235
GST Paid	-178	-924
<b>Total Tax Liabilities</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>-1,159</b>
<b>Payroll Liabilities</b>		
PAYG Payable	1,404	1,176
Superannuation Payable	7,090	4,650
Leave Provision	1,321	3,624
<b>Total Payroll Liabilities</b>	<b>9,815</b>	<b>9,450</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>20,227</b>	<b>12,279</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>3,928</b>	<b>-3,079</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Earnings	-3,079	-5,800
Current Year Surplus/Deficit	7,006	2,722
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>3,928</b>	<b>-3,079</b>

## Western Region Environment Centre Inc.

New Farm Road  
Werribee Vic 3030

### Statement of Financial Performance

1/7/02 - 30/6/03

<b>Income</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
Donations	2,953	2,068
Fund Raising		18
Grants - General	34,000	30,332
Grants - CMF		8,350
Grant - Environment/Heritage		2,700
Grant - Ecological Footprint	3,000	
Interest	74	33
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>40,027</b>	<b>43,502</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>General Expenses</b>		
Memberships		126
Project Costs - CMF	-333	7,846
Signage & Banners		9
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Amenities	49	97
Bank Charges	18	-13
Catering	59	9
Depreciation	565	795
Environment Expenses	842	
Gifts	83	
Grant unspent - to be returned		487
Insurance	602	621
Internet	713	1,115
Office Supplies	115	25

Phone/Fax	1,534	1,849
Postage	402	219
Photocopier Costs	582	4,383
R&M Computer	186	
R&M General		365
Reference Material	227	
Rent		1,250
Stationery	129	162
Travel		5
Sundry Expenses		1,019
<b>Employment Expenses</b>		
Wages & Salaries	27,110	17,117
Superannuation	2,440	1,369
Leave Accrual	-2,304	1,923
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>33,020</b>	<b>40,780</b>
<b>Net Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>7,007</b>	<b>2,722</b>

## **AUDIT REPORT**

**To :** The Members of Western Region Environment Centre Inc.

### **Scope**

I have audited the financial reports of Western Region Environment Centre Inc. for the year ended 30 June, 2003. The governing body of the Centre are responsible for the financial reports.

The audit was conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards. The information reported in the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June, 2003, and the Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 30 June, 2003, is consistent with the accounting records maintained by Western Region Environment Centre Inc., as provided to me.

### **Audit Opinion**

In my opinion, the financial reports present fairly, in accordance with the applicable Accounting Standards, the financial position of Western Region Environment Centre Inc. as at 30 June, 2003, and the results of its operation for the year then ended.

**Dr. Philomena Leung,**

**FCCA, FCPA**

Honorary Auditor,

3 Miller Street,

North Fitzroy.

8 September, 2003