

Activity Update December 2019 January 2020

Enjoyed 4 weeks leave



Meldanda;

1. Managed volunteers and administrations for Meldanda. Irene started chasing up insurance for Meldanda. Have been answering queries and managing bookings for the site.
2. General maintenance by volunteers include repairs to bore pump, issues with solar battery system that operates the toilet lights, spraying ants around campground, fixed fence, fixed drippers and watering.
3. We held a volunteer lunch at Meldanda to thank them for all their hard work over the year, we couldn't do it without them. We were treated to a Koala in a tree near the BBQ area.
4. An astronomer camped out at Meldanda and ASSA held their viewing night there.



Figure 1 volunteer celebration



Figure 2 Koala at Meldanda

Nursery;

5. Volunteers potted on some *Mentha australis* for potential SA Water project, cuttings of *M. acuminatum*, kept nursery tidy, weeded tubestock, transplanted seedlings (potting on), sowed other species.
6. We held a propagation day in the nursery (10/12/19) when we did cuttings of different species, we had 12 people attend to help out, even Sally Hatton from Banrock Station to see how another nursery operates.
7. The volunteers worked out a roster to water and check on the nursery and Meldanda over the December-January period. Due to the extreme temperatures we still had some fatalities.



Figure 3 propagation workshop at nursery

Committee;

8. Kept committee informed of relevant correspondence, workshops, and other information. Managed the office, volunteers, staff, and all necessary administrations including monthly accounts, reports.
9. Worked with our treasurer Lyn Carmichael to catch up on entering accounts into MYOB for financial year.
10. Held our committee meeting at Meldanda when we voted in our management committee as follows: Chairman - Chris Tugwell, Vice chairman - Rose Laucke, Treasurer - Lyn Carmichael, Public Officer – Ian Mann, these positions make up our executive committee. The other committee members are; Terry Franklin, Tricia Curtis, Brian Taylor, Helen Crisp, Cr Dennis McCarthy. We had a BBQ lunch to celebrate the end of the year.
11. Organised some window stickers for the ute to promote Meldanda, Landcare and the Dark Sky Reserve. Bob took the work ute to Elisabeth to sort out the keys for the window locks with ARB. We had a new lock posted.
12. Supported the Blanchetown Hall committee working bee with the placement of their signs for the nature trail, they also put some fence and railings around the oval to stop cars and campers driving on there (7/12/19).
13. The Blanchetown Implementation plan was accepted by the council and will now progress into a community consultation stage.

14. Meeting with Lyn Carmichael our treasurer to roll over the financial year and start entering the monthly accounts.
15. Caught up with farmer Mark Grieger to gps tree guards and take photos as part of a paddock tree project.
16. Prepared and submitted our progress report for the connecting community grants 'Wildlife Monitoring in the Mallee'. It has been accepted and the second and final invoice for project has been submitted.
17. Applied for another small grant for \$4500 and was successful, to support workshops and training to engage with the community. The aim of this project is to work with the SA Museum, Waterhouse Club and Riverland West Landcare to engage with the community with information sharing sessions about the Western Pygmy Possum and box building workshops. Mid Murray Landcare SA staff will attend 3-day training event in Melbourne to learn survey techniques, technology, Anabat Insight software and species identification. Activities 1 Jan 2020 – 30 June 2020.
18. Attended Open Space and Recreation Committee meeting (5/12/19) to present my reports that were included in the agenda.
19. Prepared a quote for the Mid Murray Council to update their Roadside Vegetation Management Plan.
20. Chris made contact with Ecosia to see if he could sources some funding support for bushfire recovery, but was unsuccessful.



Figure 4 new promotional stickers



Figure 5 working bee at Blanchetown

Murray Darling MEGA Microbat Project;

21. Attended 3-day training course in Melbourne to learn how to use software program called Insight for identifying bat calls. Learnt how to build our own dichotomous key for the bat species in our region.
22. Registered for Bat Conference in New Zealand and sent in abstract for a spoken presentation titled '**From Rangelands to River - a Community Monitors Bats**'. The presentation will cover the power of partnerships and networks in achieving region wide success by expanding the reach and capacity of a local community project.

Increasing productivity of Irongrass grasslands;

23. Provided a summary update to project leader Nicola Barnes and invoice for work to date.
24. Brenton and Sheralee planted some grasses in the seed orchard at Meldanda (5/12/19).
25. Sheralee, Cryss and Andy did some work in the native grass seed orchard and weeded the caltrop, fixed up leaking pipe.
26. Attended a cultural burning session in Adelaide, hosted by Adelaide city council with guest presenter Victor Steffensen from QLD. Victor is an Aboriginal Fire Practitioner from Far North Queensland and expert in Aboriginal land management through the use of fire (4/12/19).
27. All the materials were delivered to Meldanda so we can get started on setting up the new seed production area.
28. Started preparing information for upcoming Summer Grass Workshop.
29. Supported a Seed Production Workshop/Discussion in Mt barker (10/12/19).
30. Continue to collect and maintain seed boxes in nursery for the project, some are pictured below.



Figure 6 *Minuria leptophylla*



Figure 7 *Setaria constricta* and *jubiflora*

Western Pygmy Possums in the Mid Murray/Murray Mallee region;

1. Before Christmas Rowena Danks from Murray Mallee LAP and myself (Aimee Linke) went for a drive up to a Mallee property south of Loxton, near Billiatt wilderness Protection Area. We took some possum boxes up to landholder/farmer Lou Westbrook. We installed boxes, collected location data and inspected boxes already installed with a camera.
2. Emailed participants of project whose location data we haven't received yet. We still have some landholders to go and visit to help with gps data and photos.



Figure 8 Lou and Rowena installing WPP box



Figure 9 Rowena checking box with camera

River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve;

3. An astronomer camped out at Meldanda and ASSA held their viewing night there.
4. Chris supported the first Dark Sky tour run by Kelly Kuhn, through Juggle House Experiences, they covered a large amount of the reserve area and businesses within, including Big Bend by Night and the Swan Reach Hotel.
5. Keep getting enquiries about the reserve, where to view stars and the best places to stay.
6. We are currently updating the website for the River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve.

<https://www.facebook.com/RiverMurrayDarkSkyReserve/> keep up to date by following the Facebook Page