

Nettleton Park. Local community connections, an enjoyable day...and one that all will cherish.

Ruthie Scharley and Jeff Patchell

Nettleton Park is a beautiful green wedge in Glen Iris that is located at the confluence of Back and Gardiners Creeks in the green leafy corridor that lines the waterways. It's a biodiversity area and highly valued by the City of Boroondara, Melbourne Water and our Back2Nettleton Friends Group (B2N).

B2N formed in March 2021 to actively take responsibility and care for the park. It's a very popular place for sporting teams, dog walkers, exercisers and anyone who wants to meditate and enjoy some time out while breathing in the scent of the eucalypts.

In recent months the area has been in the centre of significant sewer pipe descaling and rehabilitation works conducted by Melbourne Water and their partners, Safety Focused Performance Joint Venture (SFPJV). These works on the 120 years plus old infrastructure extend along the nominal green corridor between Burke and Warrigal Roads and the manholes GCM17 and GCM18 that are located in Nettleton have been a significant focus.

Unfortunately, the parks and open spaces have suffered unavoidable damage over the wet winter period, as heavy equipment was needed to support the contractors. Senior Ecologist, Carly Martin, was keen to educate all workers who were employed on this site about why it was necessary to preserve and respect this biodiversity site and revegetate the area when the works were completed.

Melbourne Water was keen to restore the natural landscape and leave the parklands in good order. To achieve this, Melbourne Water worked with the Back2Nettleton Friends Group (B2N) to hold a Community Planting Day on the morning of September 15, when some 1500 grasses and herbaceous plants were successfully planted.

It was a great coming together of the project staff, distinguishable in their orange high visibility jackets and pants and hard hats and the local community members of the B2N Friends in their gardening civvies. The morning started with a very powerful Acknowledgement of Country by Aboriginal leader Rev. Glenn Loughrey, the vicar at St Oswald's Anglican Church, Glen Iris.

The Senior Engagement Advisor for SFPJV, Jenny Hiller said 'Glenn gave a great explanation about what "Country" means to indigenous Australians. He articulated the reasons we should all care for Country in a way that everyone present could resonate with and it absolutely set the tone for the day, connecting everyone present and making us all feel as one with nature'.

The morning of planting activity was finished off with a well-earned lunch for all and the swapping of leafy stories.

B2N Friends have a long-term commitment to improving the upkeep of the parklands and recent plantings. Working bees take place on the second Sunday and the second and third Thursday mornings of each month from 9.30 am onwards. For updated information, contact back2nettletonfriends@gmail.com or, look for us on Facebook. Everyone is welcome to join in.

B2N Convenor, Ruthie Scharley, was excited about the camaraderie between everyone on the day. She commented, 'With the intense focus of the mass plantings, spreading mulch along walking tracks, weeding and direct seed sowing, our management of the park has significantly advanced and assisted in growing our membership'.

The event was further supported by the City of Boroondara Parks and Garden biodiversity technical officer, Lyle Ruthven, who planned and managed where the new plants were required.