

# TreeProject



**November 2014**

**Ribbons of Green: Working Wonders**

**Seed Banks Under Threat**

**Windbreaks— Points to consider**



*Sowing the seeds for a sustainable future*

## A Productive Winter

We've had a series of successful, large planting days throughout the winter of 2014. Around the Coldstream and Healesville areas, Ribbons of Green planting days have seen thousands of trees put into the ground, while the 13th Annual Intrepid Travel and TreeProject planting at Yarra Bend Park in Kew was a great success. A big thanks to all of the growers, planters and sponsors!

In this edition of the newsletter we take a look at Ribbons of Green, talk with Jim Robinson of Greening Australia about the issues facing seedbanks, and we provide some advice on planting windbreaks and seedling care. We also take a look back at a 1993 planting day in the Warrenbayne Boho region.

You will find the dates for all of the coming working bees to prepare for the 2015 distribution of seedling grower kits listed on page 9.

The newsletter is a place to share the stories and experiences of TreeProject's volunteers. Please kindly keep sending us your stories and photos.

**Thank you to TreeProject supporters and donors**

**TreeProject**

3/247 Flinders La Melbourne Vic 3000  
Ph: 03 9650 9477 Fax: 03 9650 4385  
[info@treeproject.asn.au](mailto:info@treeproject.asn.au)  
[www.treeproject.asn.au](http://www.treeproject.asn.au)

**Cover — Alexander is the grandson of our Geelong Coordinator, Wilma Trew.**

**Thank you Impact Digital for sponsorship in the printing of**

## A Thank You to Volunteers Kurt and Brad

TreeProject would like to make a special thanks to volunteers Kurt van Wijck and Brad Rob

Kurt is a Coldstream landholder who has supervised many (too numerous to mention!) plantings over the years in and around Yarra Valley, Gippsland, Castlemaine and Yea. The success of recent plantings in the Yarra Valley is thanks to Kurt's role in bringing the days together. Kurt takes care of the finer details to make the days happen, including putting calls through to landholders and council, organising meetings between groups and TreeProject, co-ordinating locations for plantings and overseeing the days themselves.

Kurt told us that, "the desperate race to protect our environment, and to make a difference" is what keeps him putting in all of the work that he does. Combined with this, the connections that have been built between long-term volunteers in the planting areas:

"Some [volunteers] really stand out and you remember them when they come back years later. Some of them have been coming to the Yarra Valley for close to 10 years now maybe even longer ... It gives me great joy to see these people return year after year."

Thanks to funding from the Garry White Foundation the TreeProject nursery manager, Brad Rob, has been available to co-ordinate seedlings for the plantings. Brad's contribution has been indispensable.

In his role, Brad sorts through all of the seedlings that are delivered by growers for the landholder properties and also collects seedlings from growers to deliver to the Yarra Valley. Sorting the seedlings is no small task. For the most recent planting, Brad told us, "volunteers did an amazing job of growing at least 13,000 seedlings, probably more!"

Brad also explained that the most complex part of sorting is "ensuring you have correct number and variety of seedlings". A particular problem this year was the inclusion of seedlings that weren't yet ready for planting.

"Some growers aren't sure how to determine if a seedling is ready to plant or not, some underdeveloped plants are delivered, then there's a last minute panic to replace them. Having seedlings delivered in a timely manner prior to planting greatly assists in reducing the stress and time involved with this."

Brad applies impressive patience and a fine eye for detail in making sure that landholders receive the seedlings that they need, and has helped supervising the planting days as well. In Kurt's words, "there is no way TreeProject and I could have done it without him!"



*Kurt van Wijck*



*Brad Rob*

**Thanks Kurt and Brad!**

# Ribbons of Green: Working Wonders in the Victorian Landscape

Emily Morison provides an overview of the Ribbons of Green initiative and speaks with Project Officer Benn Sheffield and planter Fiona Conway

Indigenous plants bring so much to our urban landscape. They help to reduce carbon emissions, provide essential habitat for wildlife and create soil stability. And, of course, they are beautiful. The Ribbons of Green program is an important Victorian initiative committed to providing free indigenous plants to schools, community groups and private landowners in order to encourage the establishment of bush habitat.

“We do everything from over story trees to grasses,” says Ribbons of Green Project Officer Benn Sheffield. “We try to put back a little patch of bush, basically”. Ribbons of Green provides not only the plants but also the guards, stakes and weed mats necessary to help the seedlings establish themselves.

The primary aims of the program are to offset Council’s vehicle fleet carbon emissions and to enhance biodiversity by producing native bush habitat. As Benn explains, the program aims to plant 60,000 native plants each year. About 30,000 of these are allocated to council land, whether in roadside areas to improve the urban landscape, or on bushland reserves. Planting on bushland reserves is commonly coupled with weed control strategies to protect the existing flora.



Photo: Benn Sheffield

The other 30,000 plants are allocated for planting on private property and school grounds, and the land owners and school communities do the site preparation and planting themselves. State and private schools have embraced the program, there is an emphasis on students being engaged in the planting process and educated about the importance of biodiversity.

Benn is heavily involved with helping private property owners in the Healesville / Yarra Glen area to plant and grow indigenous plants. Ben notes that Ribbons of Green has evolved to be much more than revegetation planting: “We’re happy to help with land management not just biodiversity planting”. One of his key roles is helping new property owners develop land management strategies that look after the ecosystem: although a thin band of trees may be sufficient for providing a property’s windbreak, slightly thickening this band can produce valuable habitat and deliver good shelter for livestock. The program offers advice on how to select appropriate species, prepare the soil and reduce erosion. “We work with the landowners; we’re here to help”.

Ribbons of Green also plays an important role in fire-prone areas like Mount Dandenong, where the program focuses less on planting and more on helping residents to

identify differences between natives and weeds and tackle weed challenges.

Fiona Conway, who has been working as a planter with Ribbons of Green for over two years, is passionate about the land and feels lucky to have a property with plenty of greenery. As a livestock owner, she understands the importance of trees and their leaf litter for the health of stock on rural properties. She says that one of the highlights of being involved in the program is the great diversity of people she gets the chance to work with.

Ribbons of Green welcomes corporates and individuals who are passionate about trees and caring for the landscape. “I enjoy seeing other people express their appreciation of the land”. Last year, Fiona was involved in the planting of 3,000 trees and this year has already planted 2,500. “It’s great to see the ecology taking off just because you’ve planted some trees”

*Emily Morison*

# Victorian seed banks under threat

Juliana Rozek examines the state of local seed banks

Victorian seed banks provide revegetation groups including TreeProject with high quality seed from local areas. A lack of direct government funding has meant local seed banks are reliant on covering their costs with commercial seed sales and volunteers for staff. This limits local seed banks' capacity to fill orders for revegetation projects and puts their long-term survival in jeopardy.

## Seed banks: the ultimate insurance policy

Seed banks exist around the world as an insurance policy against natural disasters that could wipe out native vegetation and agricultural crops. They are important to TreeProject because while some of our landholders gather their own seed from vegetation on their properties, for others this is not an option. They rely on seed bank networks such as Seeding Victoria and the Port Phillip Seedbank for seed gathered from their local area.

## The whole seedy business

Jim Robinson from Greening Australia is a seasoned environment worker currently operating Port Phillip Seedbank. He described the current state of government support for seed banks as "largely indirect".

"(Support) comes from funding of large-scale restoration-biolink projects undertaken by Landcare Networks and Groups including Friends, in partnership with Catchment Management Areas (CMAs), DEPI, Parks Victoria, local government and other agencies (such as Melbourne Water) and by organisations such as Greening Australia."

In the last 10 years funding for these important large-scale restoration projects has been erratic. Only some CMA regions have received funding through Caring for Country and the Biodiversity Fund, and many of these projects are finished or very close to it. The only replacement in the works is the 20 Million Trees Programme, part of the Federal Government's 'Direct Action' plan on climate change.

Jim also points out that seed banks are capable of doing much more than supplying seed.

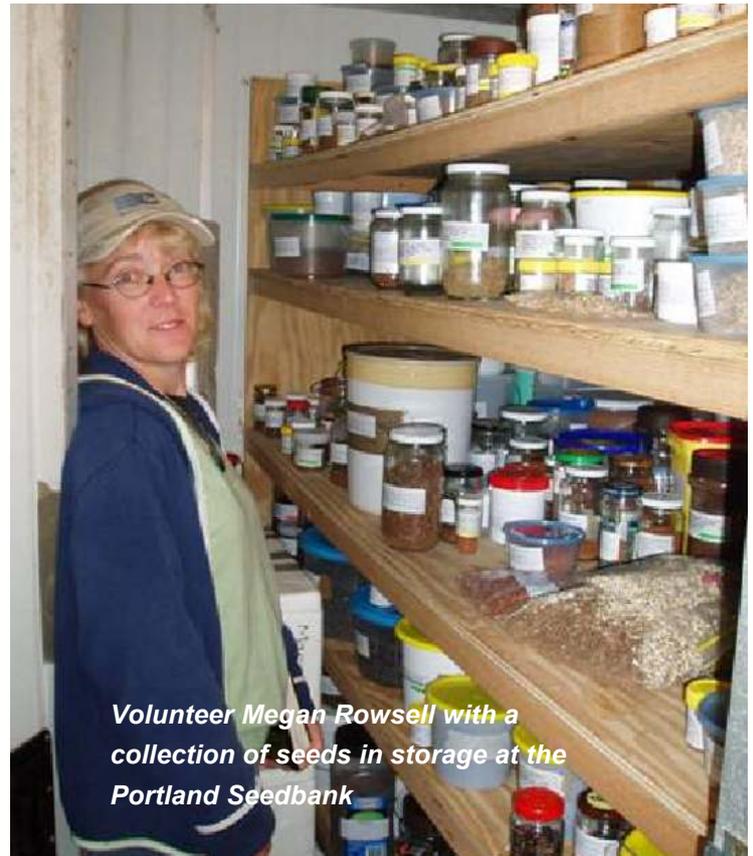
"This includes species conservation programs of rare and threatened species, a wide range of seed related education and training and community capacity building, various research projects, germination testing and seed supply in dry years."



Beyond this, the seed banks are reliant on the small revenue that is turned over through seed sales and workshops, or they can apply for community grants.

## Seeding Victoria

Seeding Victoria is a non-profit network of seed banks which provides local seed through locations in Western Victoria; Central, South, Wimmera and Mallee. It has grown since being established in 1994 into the Ballarat Region



Volunteer Megan Rowsell with a collection of seeds in storage at the Portland Seedbank

Seed Bank in Creswick, servicing approximately 50% of Victoria and providing assistance to broader Victoria and southern NSW. Its aim is to provide ethically sourced native seed for revegetation projects across the region.

*As well as collecting and storing seeds, Seeding Victoria assists in Regional assessment of seed requirements for projects, including reporting and proposals. It works with landholders and project officers in developing seed production areas and develops training programs that improve community knowledge about seed supply, collection and natural resource management.*

Dan Frost, a manager at Seeding Victoria, identifies similar problems with funding for seed banks. There is no funding outside of the department-funded revegetation work", he says, referring to money that comes through the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and Vic Roads. However, as Dan told us, "most of the funding seems to be for tree planting itself".

## A resource for the future

Our local seed banks are critical for landscape scale revegetation projects which re-connect remnant vegetation, allow the movement of fauna and flora and provide carbon offsets.

In Jim Robinson's ideal world "these benefits would be reflected in the scale of bipartisan government funding support over some years. In this event, quality seed supply in the quantities required would be a critical aspect underpinning this work and inevitably support for the regional seed banks network would be a by-product."

Seed banks are too important for the future of our land to rely on inconsistent funding and the whims of the three year election cycle.

**Juliana Rozek**

# Precarious Funding: Jim Robinson on Victoria's Seed Banks

The regional seed banks in Victoria have not received any direct government funding for some years. In the early days (1990's) when the regional seed banks were setting up, a number of them were variously supported by funding from regional Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs).

But no longer. Seed is a commercial product. For some years the regional seed banks have been dependent on selling enough seed and having enough turnover to support paid staff. These days most have small seed sales and they largely rely on volunteers, often under the guidance of very part-time employed staff.

Seed bank staff generally co-ordinate seed supply and depend on a few reliable and experienced collectors to collect for their seed bank, and take a commission from seed sales to keep the operation going.

## The Melbourne Indigenous Seedbank

The Melbourne Indigenous Seedbank (MIS) has operated since the early 1990's, underpinned by direct Federal funding of Greening Australia projects (Bushcare) and involving a range of community capacity-education and training projects. Seed sales have been relatively small for many years and the seed bank co-ordinator position has been funded by a range of projects including contract and project collections, plant rescues, germination testing and flora and fauna surveys.

The MIS has an inventory of thousands of relatively small seedlots of a wide range of indigenous species collected across greater Melbourne. There is a limited role for direct seeding as a restoration technique in the region so there is little need for the collection and supply of large quantities of seed. We believe that the MIS will be largely dependent on volunteers to continue its useful role for the vegetation restoration industry in greater Melbourne in the future and we are actively working to this end.



## How Local is Local?

### Juliana Rozek on sourcing seeds from further afield

Using local seed in a revegetation project is important because the plants will be adapted to the local conditions of the site, including soil, rainfall, fauna and other flora. But how close is close enough?

Locality depends on the species pollen and seed dispersal mechanisms, as well as the geographical features of an area. A wind-pollinated plant will have a larger local area than one which relies on insects with small home ranges. Sometimes mountains, rivers and vegetation gradients provide natural barriers to dispersal.

Within a local area it is also important to look for seeds from similar environments to the revegetation site, rather than what is geographically closest.

Sometimes revegetation projects need to look beyond the local. Fragmentation of native vegetation and a decrease in population numbers lower the genetic diversity in a local area and decrease the chance a species will be able to adapt to changing environmental conditions. In some cases it may be better to introduce seeds and plants with a provenance further away to increase the gene pool.

The Button Wrinklewort (*Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides*) is a small, endangered daisy once found throughout the grasslands of south-west Victoria and in NSW/ACT. It is an interesting species genetically because its self-incompatible- individual plants can't pollinate themselves. Genetic diversity is very low in some of the 26 populations of the plant, with some only consisting of five mature individuals. This has reduced the seed set and the health of plants, and made some populations non-viable in the long-term. To increase genetic diversity and ensure the survival of the species, plants from different populations have been crossed.

The best seed to use for revegetation is from a local area, which differs between species and geographical areas, with similar environmental features to the revegetation site. However, to increase the genetic diversity of a species it is sometimes necessary to use seed from further afield.

In other, sadder, cases it is not possible to find any seeds from the local area because of extreme vegetation loss.

*Juliana Rozek*

# Planting a Windbreak: Benefits and Advice

Planting a windbreak or a shelterbelt of trees will increase the health and productivity of a property. A windbreak provides protection for animals and crops against extreme weather conditions and can help to reduce soil erosion and dryland salinity.

Ideally a windbreak is composed of several rows of trees that are well-spaced from one another, with smaller trees on the outside of the break and taller trees in the centre row(s). Making sure that there is space for wind to filter through the break will ward off the eddying or turbulence that can result from an impenetrable screen of trees.

The windbreak needs to be an adequate length to be effective — 15 to 20 times the height of the tallest trees. Otherwise the wind can be deflected around the ends of the break and the trees will lose their effectiveness.

Consider the conditions of the property in situating the windbreak: the direction of the prevailing winds, the moisture levels of the soil you would like to plant in and the areas that would benefit the most from protection.

It is always recommended to plant native tree windbreaks. Native species will create natural habitat for wildlife and will typically have a higher survival rate. The use of species that regenerate naturally may also be useful.

The TreeProject website can help you to determine the species that are best suited to your area. Visit the seedlings ordering page at [www.treeproject.org.au/order/before-you-order](http://www.treeproject.org.au/order/before-you-order). Scroll down to the 'Before you Order' section. Underneath the 'Identify the Planting Area' subheading, you will see both the DEPI interactive map and the Biodiversity map explanation. These resources should help you to identify the best species for your area.

For further help call the TreeProject office on (03) 9650 9477 or the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) on 136 186.

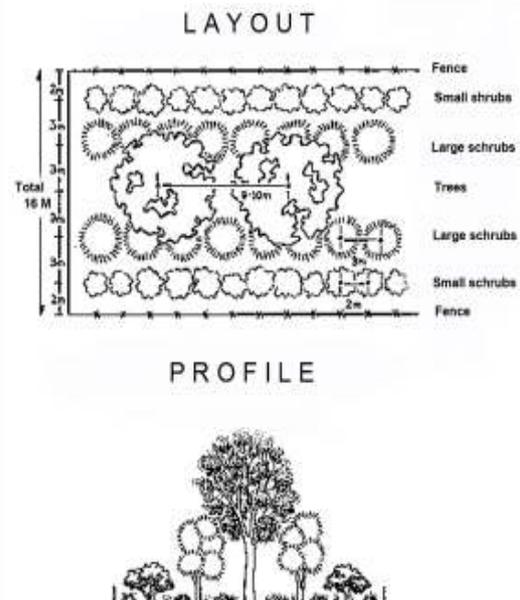
Sian Vate

Further detailed advice on windbreak planting is in the guides below:

## — Practical Information Note — Windbreaks

### Points to consider

- Benefits:** Well designed windbreaks shelter over 10 times the mature height of the windbreak e.g. 20 m high windbreaks shelter land within at least 200 m.
- Orientation:** North-south to minimise shading.
- Length:** Long enough so wind is not deflected around the windbreak sideways. Make windbreaks 12 times the mature height of the windbreak trees e.g. 240 m long for windbreaks 20 m high.
- Width:** A minimum of 5-7 rows makes a good windbreak that accommodates spaces from scattered plant deaths, and has greater habitat value than those with 2-3 rows.
- Spacing:** Depends on site fertility, rainfall and species planted (e.g. use wider spacings for lower rainfall areas). Sample spacings are 2 m between outside rows and fences and 3 m between all rows.
- Profile:** Plant tallest plants in centre to lift the wind gradually and reduce eddying (see example below). Another design is tallest plants on one side, graduating to short plants on the other. This design provides more shade closer to the windbreak.
- Fire:** Consider designing strategic breaks about 20 m wide in long windbreaks to prevent a 'wick' effect in case of fire.



# A Look Back: The Warrenbayne Boho Planting Day 1993

In response to TreeProject's recent 25th anniversary, long-term volunteer grower Alan Collard has provided us with some photos of a large planting day that took place in the Warrenbayne Boho region outside of Violet Town on August 22, 1993.

The planting was co-ordinated by the Warrenbayne Boho Landcare group, a group that has a proud history of being one of the first established Landcare groups. The Warrenbayne Boho Land Protection Group was first registered in 1983.

For the day, TreeProject provided seed and 6 planting kits (42 boxes) to the volunteer growers of the Coatesville Uniting Church in East Bentleigh. 1800 eucalypt and acacia seedlings were grown by the group and then transported to a collection point in Melbourne for delivery to the planting site.

The planting site itself was a 1200 x 8 metre corridor between farms. Milk cartons were used for the seedlings as protection against rabbits and the elements.

Around 50 volunteers helped to plant on the day. They were treated to a barbeque lunch by the Landcare Group. The TreeProject Co-ordinator on the day was Andrew Serpell.

The top right photo depicts the tree corridor in its infancy while the bottom photo captures (from left to right) volunteers Rob Pocklington, Alan Collard, Linda Barnes and Matthew Leditschke, the co-ordinator for the Church group.

*With thanks to Alan Collard for information and to Joy Collard, the photographer.*

*Do you have photos of a planting from earlier years? We'd love to hear from you!*



## Fundraising Movie Night

Support TreeProject and have a great night out



The latest from writer/director Laïla

Marrakchi (Marock) is a lovingly crafted family drama with a warm sense of humour. The film's ensemble cast includes some of the Middle East's finest actors including Morjana Alaoui, Nadine Labaki (Where Do We Go Now), Lubna Azabal and Hiam Abbass (both from Paradise Now), and the legendary Omar Sharif. The death of her father, a successful Moroccan entrepreneur, sees the fiercely independent New Yorker Sofia returning to Tangiers. There she is reunited with her grieving mother and two sisters, the beautiful but naïve Miriam and the uptight Kenza. Over the course of the traditional three-day mourning ritual, the four women are forced to confront a host of long-buried family secrets that threaten to tear them apart again.

**Thursday, November 20 8pm**

**Cinema Nova**

**380 Lygon St Carlton**

**Ticket price \$22**

**Tickets must be purchased prior to the evening**  
Book tickets online: [www.trybooking.com/GDRD](http://www.trybooking.com/GDRD) or  
[www.trybooking.com/107929](http://www.trybooking.com/107929) or simply email Tree  
Project [de.grebner@treeproject.org.au](mailto:de.grebner@treeproject.org.au) with **Rock  
the Casbah** in subject line or **SMS 0414 295 359**  
by **COB Wednesday 19 November 2014**.

# Advice for New Growers

## Wilma Trew offers some Words of Wisdom

***Hello all new TreeProject growers for season 2014 - 2015. Welcome aboard!***

*A little bit about me:*

Like yourselves I was once first-time grower, back in January of 2010, and since then with encouragement from the TreeProject Melbourne office team, I have become a co-ordinator, trainer, distributor and grower in the Geelong area, and I continue to develop as a grower. It is a very rewarding part of my life. I have met and encouraged many growers and landholders and I enjoy the enthusiasm of the growers and the appreciation of the landholders.

At your training session you will have learned quite a lot about growing seedlings trees and some of you may already have some experience doing this.

It is really very easy, especially with all of the help to be had from the TreeProject team. As a volunteer grower your main support person is your co-ordinator, who also is a volunteer and as such loves to encourage, support and get the best results for both the grower's satisfaction and the landholder's order.

The TreeProject website is a really valuable resource of training information, as is the Growers DVD. As you work your way through your growing season, keep referring to these resources and great friends with your co-ordinator. Ask questions and ask more questions, and never, never doubt your ability to get it right. You will get as much support as you need!



***Wilma Trew, Geelong Coordinator***

### ***A few tips from my experience:***

Firstly, make sure you enjoy it all! As you are helping revegetate our wonderful countryside.

Never hesitate to chat with your co-ordinator. You will never be a 'bother'.

Revisit the TreeProject website frequently. It helps to keep you on track and connected.

At the end of the season make sure the seedlings are presented according to the directions. It can be very time-consuming when several kits are returned to the distributor and they need their roots trimmed and/or leaf litter removed from various garden plants or slugs thrown out – you get the drift.

Remember that the seeds are sometimes tiny and really need to be kept moist. I like to visualise them as they would germinate out in the countryside – probably kept quite shaded by grasses, as well as by the taller trees, keeping them moist and protected. Our backyard nurseries need to simulate this.

Fully understand the deep appreciation of the landholder. For some of you, you may never meet this person. I always wish all growers could be at my place as the landholder sees their seedling babies for the first time. It is awesome.

Keep your eye on the weather report so you're aware if a rain storm is approaching - as you may need to cover the seedlings a little to stop rain damage — or a heat wave with strong northerly winds could dry them out quickly.

Fall in love with them as they germinate and take lots of pictures of your babies.

And good luck! I hope you continue with the new skills you will be developing.

*Wilma Trew*



*River Red Gums in the wet season*

*Photo: Environment Victoria*

# Working Bees

## 2014 - 2015

**Come join us!**

In preparation for the distribution of seedling grower kits, TreeProject has been holding working bees at the historic stockyards at the Kensington Depot.

On the days, tubes are sterilised for reuse, growing materials are measured and packaged, and kits are assembled.

The working bees are a great place to network and to meet some of the lovely TreeProject people in Melbourne.

We'd love to have you along! Dates for the bees are listed in the table below. Please note the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in November is Derby Day so there'll be no bee that day.

**Lunch provided!**

Locations:

**Working bee and Grower Kit Distribution:**

**Kensington Stockyards**

*Cnr. Smithfield Road & Bluestone Street  
(cnr Racecourse & Smithfield Rds).  
Mel. Ref Map 42 J1*

**Grower Kit Distribution:**

**Bendigo** Council Nursery Mackenzie St. West,  
Golden Square  
**Geelong** 21 Talpa Cres, Corio

# Intrepid Travel & TreeProject Planting Day

August 31st was a glorious spring day in Melbourne, perfect weather for the 13th Annual Intrepid Travel & TreeProject planting at Yarra Bend Park in Kew!

Our thanks to Intrepid Planting for their generous sponsorship for so many years. Together we have planted over 10,000 seedlings.

Pictured bottom right, De Grebner, (left) TreeProject's Project Manager, and Jane Crouch, (right) Intrepid's departing Responsible Business Communications Specialist.



### NOVEMBER 2014

Sunday 9th 10am - 3pm	Tube Washing	Kensington
Saturday 15th 10am - 3pm	Tube Washing	Kensington
Sunday 23rd 10am - 3pm	Tube Washing	Kensington
Monday 24th 9am -12pm	First Distribution	Bendigo
Saturday 29th 10am - 3pm	Kit Preparation	Kensington
Sunday 30th 10am - 3pm	First Distribution	Kensington

### DECEMBER 2014

Wed 3rd 3.30pm - 6.30pm	First Distribution	Kensington
Saturday 6th 10am - 12pm	First Distribution	Kensington
Saturday 6th 11am-3pm	First Distribution	Geelong

### JANUARY 2014

Saturday 10th 10am - 3pm	Tube Washing	Kensington
Sundays 18th 10am - 3 pm	Tube Washing	Kensington
Saturday 24th 10am - 3pm	Kit Preparation	Kensington
Sunday 25th 10am-3pm	Second Distribution	Kensington
Wed 28th 3.30pm-6.30pm	Second Distribution	Kensington
Saturday 31st 10am- 12pm	Second Distribution	Kensington

### FEBRUARY 2014

Saturday 7th 11am-3pm	Second Distribution	Geelong
-----------------------	---------------------	---------

**Working Bee Dates 2014-15**



# TreeProject

Return Address  
247 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne Vic 3000

Reg. No. A0018731  
Print Post Approved  
PP331 08870006

SURFACE  
MAIL

POSTAGE PAID  
AUSTRALIA  
SURFACE

Thank you to our sponsors for their continued support



**Impact**digital  
For digital printing with impact

Garry White Foundation

