

yrka bulletin

The quarterly newsletter of Yarra Riverkeeper Association (yrka)
Issue 32 **Late Winter 2014**



Showing Melburnians the wonders of the Yarra is the most enjoyable thing we do. Our walks, bike tours and illustrated presentations have proved popular and effective in engaging the community. They showcase the river's "delights and plights" and, importantly, how everyone can help care for it. To date we have given/led 600 talks and tours involving a total audience of over 25,000.

Please join our next two enjoyable river tours

Upper Yarra bike ride - a guided ride along the beautiful Upper Yarra River on Sunday, 21 September. The ride starts 11 am at the Upper Yarra Museum in Yarra Junction (Melways 288 D7) and follows the historical railway line to Warburton, approximately 20km return. Experts will speak about the river, its wonders and stories. For information and registration, contact Todd Holman at todd_holman@hotmail.com or phone 0425 217 921.

Waterway wander and wonders - a stroll along a picturesque section of the Yarra in North Warrandyte on Sunday, 5 October. The walk starts 10.30 am in front of 42 Osborne Road, North Warrandyte (Melways 23 K10) and follows a narrow, unsealed bush track, duration 2 hours. Learn about the wonders of the river from the Yarra Riverkeeper. For information and registration, contact Ian Penrose at info@yarrariver.org.au or phone 0409 510 766.



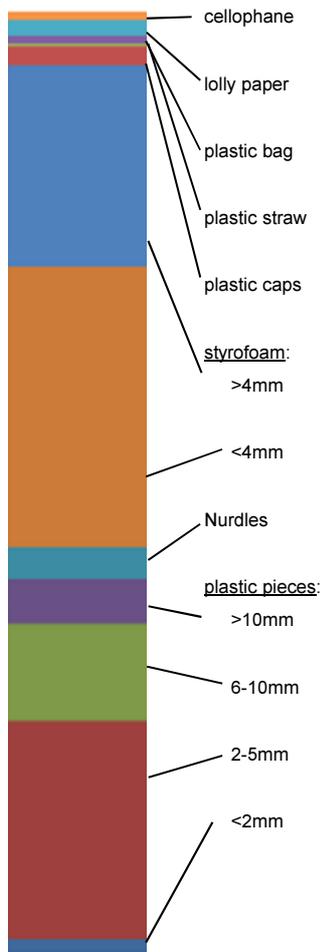
Seal of approval for the Yarra? When on patrol in mid-August we were thrilled to come across a seal (perhaps an Australian sea lion?) swimming upstream under Wallen Road Bridge (Swan St). That's 15km from its normal domain of the clear salt water in the bay. Although in unfamiliar territory, it managed to catch, and eventually swallow, an eel.



Photos: (top) Guided walk along the riverbank in Studley Park. (middle) Presentation about the river's wildlife to young students. (bottom) Bike ride along a Yarra tributary.

Big THANK YOU to City of Boroondara for awarding us a Triennial Operational Community Strengthening Grant of \$8,200 per year from 2014/15 to 2016/17. It will support the program we call *Caring for the Yarra River, Boroondara's Best Natural Asset*. Thank you City of Boroondara. We and the Yarra are very grateful.





← **What plastics pollute our river?** Our last bulletin described the litter survey/trawls in the Lower Yarra that we recently conducted with the Port Phillip Baykeeper. It was in response to the growing concern worldwide about the harmful amounts of plastic eaten by aquatic wildlife. The diagram shows the relative number of litter items collected in eight 30-min trawls. The most frequently captured item was styrofoam. We conclude that the trawls captured only the background levels of micro-plastics and suspect that most plastic pollution enters the river during storm events or from spillage, matters to be studied further.

Big THANK YOU to City of Stonnington
for awarding us a grant of \$15,000 under their Community Grants Program for 2014/15. It will support our education and advocacy work, and patrol boat operation. Thank you City of Stonnington. We and the Yarra are very grateful.



Photo: Waterkeeper Alliance President Bobby Kennedy Jr. (right) nephew of JFK, congratulating Werribee Riverkeeper John Forrester who recently rejoined the Alliance.

Riverkeepers worldwide gather in Pittsburgh

Yrka is a member of the global Waterkeeper Alliance comprising waterway advocates who patrol and protect over 100,000 miles of rivers, streams and coastlines in North and South America, Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa. In June our Riverkeeper Ian joined 200 other members at their annual conference in Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania. Ian said "The great strengths of the movement are the valuable lessons shared between Waterkeepers tackling similar issues, and the mutual support for each other's endeavours."

Who are our members?

Andrew Kelly (right) is a children's book publisher who encourages young people to love the world around them. He has lived near the Yarra most of his life, and was inspired to join us by the words of Richie Garrett, an early Hudson Riverkeeper, "find a place on this earth that is meaningful to you and protect it". We are proud to have Andrew as a member of our association and our new Vice President.



Join yrka today!

Yrka is a grassroots community organisation concerned with the health of the Yarra River from source to mouth. The strength of yrka depends on its membership numbers and commitment.

Please pass this bulletin on to like-minded individuals and groups, along with the yrka membership form, available at: www.yarrariver.org.au



Yrka is grateful to



for their grants to fund our river monitoring, community education and advocacy activities.

Contact Yrka

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