

# ***Murnong Indigenous Garden Inc.***

ABN: 81 638 949 729

Website: [bit.ly/Murnong](http://bit.ly/Murnong)

## **Annual Activity Report 2022/2023**

Presented by Val Lang (President) to the Murnong Indigenous Garden AGM 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2023

The Purpose of Murnong Indigenous Garden Inc. is to establish and operate an Indigenous Plant Garden at Lismore to promote Reconciliation, Education and Tourism.

The Murnong garden site, at 30-32 William Street, is leased from the Corangamite Shire. It has been operating for 3 years and it has just entered its second 3-year lease with the Shire

The initial garden beds with native grasses and other volcanic plains plants are now well established. During the past year, volunteers maintained the site and continued with planting, weeding and to form further beds. The layout is informed by a design by Greenaway architects to reference the layout of a possum skin cloak.

Activities during the year included:

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, a celebration of NAIDOC week. The flag-raising ceremony was followed by a presentation by Debra Morris on William Cooper, the widely respected Aboriginal political activist and community leader (1860s to 1940s)

Sunday 2nd September, Sue Cole, local resident and historian, joined us for a light lunch and a conversation about James Dawson. Sue Cole is a direct descendant of Dawson. Dawson 1806 -1900 lived much of his life in Camperdown and wrote the book *Languages and Customs of Several Tribes of Aborigines in the Western District Australia*. His writing clearly reflects his sympathy for the local First Nations people.

Friday 30th September, Murnong committee members met with a representative from the South West Community Foundation for photographs and interviews to promote Murnong and the SW Foundation support of Murnong. Linda Wood and Val Lang had previously attended a SW Community Foundation presentation at Deakin University Warrnambool. The resulting article about Murnong Indigenous Garden can be viewed on the SW Community Foundation website under the heading 'Murnong Garden Bowling Community Over.'

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March, for Reconciliation week, Alexandrina Austen Lovett, a Gunditjmara woman, spoke about her life: 'From Stolen Generation to Restoration to Reconciliation', followed by Alice Mayberry, a Yorta Yorta, woman with dance. The evening was completed, by composer and musician Noah Sycopoulis, with music and song.

Sunday 2nd April a Victorian Volcanic Plains Grassland Identification workshop was held with support from a Corangamite Shire Environment Grant. Murnong committee members supplied the grassland plants and Dr Alicia Merriam, Lismore Land Protection Group facilitator, provided expertise on how to formally identify local native grasses and a number

of invading grassy weeds. The 16 workshop participants were introduced to the Murnong garden. Native grasses are a key element of the original and now threatened Victorian Volcanic Plains flora and many are planted in the Murnong Garden.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May Sunday A follow-on grassland walk was held to observe remnant native vegetation on a local roadside site and on nearby farmland.

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, Murnong Garden supporters visited the Geelong Botanic Gardens. They were shown plants from the Victorian Volcanic Plains and learnt about their use by the local Wadawurrung people. The group then visited the Narana Aboriginal Centre at Grovedale' with its establishing garden featuring local indigenous plants with information on their traditional use.

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May, a local *Gardens for Wildlife* booklet was launched at Murnong. This was a joint project of the Lismore Land Protection Group and the Corangamite Shire. The now available booklet has information on how to increase garden habitat for native wildlife, it features local gardens and reserves and includes a section on Murnong Indigenous Garden

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June, an Eco-dying Workshop was held with craftsperson Helen Purvis, assisted by Victoria Lovejoy, using vegetable dyes from eucalypts to create patterns on silk. The 20 participants learnt procedures which can be applied to other fabrics. The Derrinallum Community Op shop paid for silk scarf material for each participant.

Murnong received and acquitted a Facilities Grant from the Shire for fold-up tables, cloths and stackable chairs. It recently received a shire grant of \$7,500 to plan improved access to the site (toilets/pathways). It has applied for a Shire community grant for workshops with Auntie Bronwyn Razem (master weaver) and Alexandrina Mayberry (bark art)

The Murnong face book is kept up to date, the website has excellent information about Murnong Indigenous Garden and its activities, as well as links to other sources re traditional plant use, and historical publications.

The Murnong Garden committee has occasional get-togethers open to the community, and the site is open to visitors on Sunday mornings between 10am and 11.30. All are welcome: right now the chocolate lilies and vanilla lilies are in flower and the bulbine lilies are just emerging. Visitors are welcome to help at working bees or to just call in.

All of this is possible because of volunteer efforts of the committee, community members and organisations. Thank you to all who have helped in all sorts of ways: the Corangamite Shire, the Derri Op Shop, Lismore and District Lions Club and individuals who helped in special ways, for example Julie for help with a funding submission, Linda for securing a glass topped working table, Vicki a bird bath, Wilma has grown plants, the Lismore Craft shop gave prime space, and the Derri Market a site for a small fundraising stall.

Thank you to committee members for some outstanding contributions: Millicent Roberts (Vice President), Debra Morris (Secretary and serious volunteer), Chris Lang (Treasurer), Elizabeth Johnstone, Jane Laidlaw, Malcolm Marks, Linda Wood and David Morris.

The members of the Murnong Indigenous Garden committee acknowledge the Wadawurrung, the Traditional Owners and First Peoples of the land on which the garden is situated.

We respect and acknowledge their Elders, past and present and emerging.