

'i sea, i care' AMBASSADORS IN ACTION

In what has been a recurring theme for November workshops, the day started out wet and cold but by the time the Ambassadors, the weather was cheering up for their last workshop of the year. We met at Pencil Park in Keysborough for the day's activities, focussing on the health of local wetlands and connection to indigenous culture.

They started the morning looking at the fresh water invertebrates in the ponds and learning about local frog species, which were doing their best to outdo each other to be heard.

After morning break, it was time for a walk and talk around the park, looking at how stormwater is channelled through the area, local birds which were entered onto an online survey and a fantastic hour with Dean Stewart about what aboriginal life was like before settlement.

The day finished with a barbecue and wishing the Ambassadors all the best for their next adventure as they continue their environmental stewardship.

Congratulations to all Ambassadors for their hard work this year, along with Judith (Lyndale Greens), Elissa (Yarraman Oaks), Em (Silverton) and Anthony (Woranna Park) for your dedication is getting this program off the ground.

Of course, many thanks go to Kirstine Oh and Maree Keenan from City of Greater Dandenong for sponsoring the program, Caroline Wilson from BirdLife Australia for your expertise and Dean Stewart for another great insightful talk.



POT BELLY SEAHORSES UNDER BLAIRGOWRIE PIER

Despite the unusually cold and wet spring and all the new pier development at Blairgowrie marina this year, we still managed to find one of the resident pot bellied sea horse pairs doing a courtship dance.

The Pot Belly Seahorse is one of the largest species, with some adults reaching up to 30cm. They are found around the coasts of South Australia, Victoria and southern New South Wales. They live in a range of habitats including shallow sea grass meadows and deeper sponge gardens. Under the pier at Blairgowrie is an ideal environment with many areas covered in sponges for them to hide.

Male seahorses have a pouch at the front where a female will deposit her eggs. The male then incubates the eggs until they hatch about a month later. Pot bellies are strong swimmers and can travel hundreds of metres in a day.

Our sea grass meadows in Port Phillip are important habitats for pot belly seahorses and it's vital we continue to care for our bays to protect them. This is even more important at a time when globally, sea grass is declining at about 2% per year.

(Sources – Australian Museum and Pittsburgh Zoo)



(Photo Karl Bromelow)