

## President's Report 2013

Welcome everyone.

I would like to present the President's Report for Smiths Gully Landcare Group for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2013

I must begin by noting the sudden and unexpected passing of our member and friend, Mick Okey, and expressing the sorrow that all of us in the group feel at his loss.

Mick was an inaugural member, filling the role of treasurer from 1992 when the group was established. He performed the role of treasurer with quiet efficiency. That's really the way he did every thing. Working bees the same. He turned up to nearly all of them, including ones at the market site with St Andrews Landcare, and just got on with the job with energy and good humour. It is lovely that the photo of Nodding greenhood orchids on the two big Nature Trail signs and the cover of the brochure is one of Mick's. His name is on the sign acknowledging his contribution. Taking photos of the local wild flowers was one of Mick's great pleasures.

The group have wound back our activities over the last few years. We agreed at our meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April this year to meet only if requested by a member with a specific topic to discuss. We can get together for a meeting at any time, and emails can be used to pass around information and keep in touch.

Our last group event was the launch of the Smiths Gully Landcare brochure on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May this year. The morning started with a planting at the old iron bark tree mini reserve at the Smiths Gully store. The plants were purchased from Lynlee's nursery, and after the work was done, we made our way down to the Habitat Links Nursery for the formal launch of the brochure and a nice spread of food and drink.

The brochure has a beautiful fresh and contemporary feel about it. The combination of discussions about text and layout at our meetings, Delsha's design expertise and her clever use of Mick's orchid photo again, and Trish's input with the final production has resulted in a brochure our group can be proud of.

The most significant activity of the group over the last year has been our involvement with the DS&E Communities for Nature grants program for the project Nillumbik's Conservation Corridors. DS&E have allocated nearly \$600 thousand over four years. Lynlee's involvement has been crucial to our group benefiting from the funding. Several members- Maria, and Gail and Alan will be receiving assistance from the first round with work on their properties, and will have the possibility of more help in the second year that started in June. Some other Smith's Gully residents have been assisted with weed control on their properties which will help achieve the over all long term aim of controlling specific weeds in the Smiths Gully catchment.

As well as private properties being targeted, Lynlee has contracted work to be done on several weed infested sites on our roads and creek reserves.

Several members of our group have had motion sensing cameras installed on their properties this year. The cameras were purchased by Nillumbik with funds from the Communities for Nature program. Julia Franco from Nillumbik installed the cameras, and after they were retrieved, she followed up with a written report and a DVD. There were some very exciting results, especially in the St Andrews Landcare catchment area.

The new Nillumbik Landcare network was launched this time last year. Initially our group felt we were too small to participate, but Lynlee volunteered to represent us. The first Council Rep was Damian Magner. He has since been replaced by Jackie Waring. Lynlee has been too pressed for time to attend all the meetings, but is "in the loop", and receives minutes. This is appreciated- thank you Lynlee.

Our neighbours, the St Andrews Landcare Group, or SAL, have workshops and field days through out the year, and send out invitations to members of other groups. Our member's are very welcome to attend. We are both small groups, so it makes sense for us to share our resources.

Even though our group is small now, we have made lasting friendships over our years working together. Trish, with her sociable manner, has encouraged us to take time out to meet for morning tea at the Smiths Gully Store every now and then. A nice tradition that will be good to continue after Trish and Andrew sail away over the horizon!

The tradition of meeting with the Queenstown Cemetery group for our Christmas end of year get together will also enable us to keep in touch.

Pat Reynolds

14/10/13

