

President's Report – Review of 2008

First of all, thank you to the Groundswell core members who have ably taken care of business this year, and been most involved in maintaining the garden - certainly a much easier and pleasurable process when there are many people involved. I am enjoying gardening with and getting to know new friends. Perhaps gardeners are particularly lovely people? We have had a few key members move away from the area, and we have had new members, including families with children to welcome. The Montague Park Kindergarten's plot has continued to be attractive and fruitful – it's great to have more young gardeners involved.

Lots has occurred this year, I will summarize as briefly as possible.

We very much appreciate the Scouts still supporting us with space to meet, and a garage to store items and to use for mosaicing and potting. We were able to assist with their major clean out this year.

Our newly recreated website www.groundswell.org.au will be live any moment and will be a great tool to keep us in touch. This has membership forms, member guidelines, etc and we will be adding all kinds of useful information, such as from our guest speakers. Our web designer Anthony will also be teaching interested members how to update the content, and we will be linking our site to others to maximize access and usefulness. It will also have our new joint venture of a newsletter with Mornington "Dig It" - as they are more established we will begin by piggy-backing on them, and will develop our side as we can. We already have a shared calendar of activities with all the community gardens from Frankston and the Peninsula, and we have informal network meetings.

Raised bed – thank you to Frankston City Council for building this bed, as you can see it is already cropping. The money came from the VicHealth funding for Food For All. This bed will be named in memory of a much loved founding member, Eduardo Havard, who would have loved to use it. It is a great asset for members who aren't able to use the lower beds.

Our community water grant of approx \$10,000 is waiting in the bank for the ok from Scout headquarters for us to collect the water from their roof, make some repairs to their guttering, and lay pipes down to the garden. This will be so important to us for summer crops.

Our workshops this year were well run, had a great turn out and included : "water wise gardening", "composting and worm farming", "Fruit tree companion planting and pruning", and "Easy vegetable gardening". As well as that the local Green Homes group ran a sustainability picnic at Groundswell, with lovely live music, celebrating their energy and water savings to date, and many of our members enjoyed the day. All in all about 200 visitors to our garden.

Another New initiative this year, our meetings (2nd Tuesday of the month at 6pm – bring chair in warm weather) are beginning to have high quality local speakers. We found out last month why Eric has such healthy productive crops, and some of his tips. Tonight Sam will be sharing his tips on his backyard productivity. This sharing happens conversationally whenever we get together, such as the morning of the last Saturday of the month (not December though). Sometimes we organize lunch after.

As well as individual plots we have now several communal beds and the orchard which is beginning to develop understorey – this will make it more productive, healthier, and less prone to weeds. It will be good to watch the growth this summer as the spring growth is already impressive, especially as we only water as we plant, the rest is relying on the rains.

Seed saving has begun in a small way. If you are keen to learn more, “Dig It” has monthly gatherings.

You will notice that a clear compost building process is evolving in the new compost bays.

Mosaics – we have begun making mosaic pavers and decorations for our garden. It’s enjoyable, and we think stress relieving, especially ask Jessica about this.

Frankston council has, we believe, wisely decided to continue supporting the development of local community gardens by having a specific staff member in this part time role. The link has been very helpful to us.

An exciting new joint project with Frankston High School is beginning. **KATHLEEN PLEASE CAN U FILL IN THE OTHER ORGANISATIONS???????????** The VCAL students will be doing a project at Groundswell early next year. We will be hosting a get-to-know-you-lunch this December for all parties. We’re still working out what the project will entail, perhaps beginning with a fund raising sausage sizzle at Bunnings. If you have time, ideas of other resources, please speak to Kathleen or Regina (me) about it.

I am stepping down from the President’s role and would like to focus on more communication with members, and letting more people know about our garden by writing articles etc. I have gained a lot of pleasure, knowledge, support, and great experiences in the past 2 years, and thank all of you who have made that possible.

I know that the garden members have many plans and dreams of how to make this a more beautiful, welcoming and productive place – a creative bunch of people. We also have quite a few projects partly done. We look forward to an enjoyable year of community gardening together, and friendships and plants blossoming.

Life certainly is what we make it,

Regina McLeod