

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN

# **PROPOSED EDUCATION CENTRE AT THE EDITHVALE-SEAFORD WETLANDS**

During 2006 Melbourne Water will work with the community to develop plans for an educational discovery centre at the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands.

The wetlands are an internationally significant and important habitat for a variety of birds and other wildlife. The aim of the centre is to provide schools, interest groups and individuals with a better understanding of the wetlands, as well as opportunities to observe the wildlife and an appreciation of what they can do to help protect this valuable natural asset.

Melbourne Water will use a program booking system to ensure that visitor numbers to the wetlands are limited to small groups and to times that will least disturb the wildlife of the wetlands.

Plans for the centre are now in concept form and the community will be involved in developing these plans through a reference group being established by Melbourne Water.

Representatives from local community organisations and interest groups will be invited to join the reference group. Anyone in the local area who has an interest in the wetlands and who feel they can contribute to the group should call Toni Meek at Melbourne Water on 9235 7188 or email: [toni.meek@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:toni.meek@melbournewater.com.au)

It is hoped that the reference group will be established in February and that plans for the centre can be finalised by September 2006. A 'Family Day' is planned for later in the year to give the wider community an opportunity to see the draft plans and to comment on these before they are finalised.

The concept plan for the education centre was developed by Melbourne Water in close consultation with the Friends of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Community Liaison Committee, the Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Inc., representatives of the Boonerwung and Bunurong communities, local councils, environment groups, community organisations and schools.

The principles that will guide planning for the centre are that it must:

- be sympathetic to the special natural and landscape values of the Edithvale Wetland and its immediate environs;
- preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the wetlands;
- meet environmentally sustainable design guidelines and the requirements of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Ramsar Management Plan;
- be above the 100-year flood level;
- protect bird communities from disturbance while allowing the community some opportunity to experience the wetlands and their wildlife; and
- include associated improvements such as boardwalks, screens and viewing points to restrict the impacts of visitors on the wetland vegetation and wildlife.

Several sites were for the centre and the associated car park were considered. The centre will be located at the existing car park next to the wetlands off Edithvale Road on land owned by Melbourne Water. This meets wetland buffer zones recommended in the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Ramsar Management Plan.

The final plan for the centre will meet all requirements for approval under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* and the City of Kingston's planning scheme.

### **For more information**

Please call Toni Meek, Melbourne Water on 9235 7188 or email [toni.meek@melbournewater.com.au](mailto:toni.meek@melbournewater.com.au)