

Regent Honeyeater Recovery Project, Capertee Valley Tree-planting, April 2016.

Over 130 people took part in the April 30th tree-planting, including a large group of volunteers from Taronga Zoo, and a group of students and parents from Haberfield Public School. The planting took place on "Junjira" a property on the Rylstone road, which was the site of a very successful planting in 2004.

Saturday dawned with heavy cloud and rain, as predicted in the weather forecast but the gloomy start to the day did not appear to dampen the enthusiasm of our volunteers. Fortunately, the rain ceased by around 9.00 am and by late afternoon the valley was bathed in sunshine. A total of 1,845 trees and shrubs were planted. The site was not without its challenges. In particular, a short sandy section on the access track to the site, just inside the front gate, precluded access to 2WD vehicles and it was necessary for people with 2WDs to park at the property entrance and either walk or be ferried in about 800 metres to the planting site by 4WD vehicles. A further challenge was a heavy crop of Cobblers Pegs that had sprung up since Dick Turner's last inspection.

As the number of seedlings was less than normal, the large number of volunteers ensured that planting was finished soon after lunch. However, watering and the subsequent packing up continued until dark as the water tanker was late in arriving. A special thanks to those who were able to stay on and help the Land Rover's Owners Club team complete this important task before darkness fell. A useful fall of rain overnight was a welcome supplement to the efforts of the watering crew.

At the Dinner on Saturday night Dean Ingwersen gave a summary of survey results on previous planting sites which confirmed the increase in species counts that have followed after the plantings and that this continues to improve as the plantings mature. This is now ongoing analysis work which will help plan future planting efforts. The species count includes 12 woodland birds on the endangered list so the work is achieving results. The next planting is on the 19-21 August. The site is on Crown Station Road, (a good place to look for Regent Honeyeaters at that time of year) and we will be planting approximately 3,000 trees and shrubs. Access to the site will definitely be easier than in April. The annual August Regent Honeyeater surveys will take place on the Sunday. Dean Ingwersen also plans to make a brief presentation at the dinner on the preliminary results of the Spring Regent Honeyeater surveys which began in 2001 and are conducted each August, September and October.

John Rawson

