

SHARING YOUR BACKYARDS WITH US PLATYPUS



BY PLATYPUS WILDLIFE SPOKESPERSON

I've wanted to say something for a while now. Since you've moved into our area, life has gone to crap for us. It's got to the stage where we'll need to move on because it's just not safe or nice living here anymore. Oh... Sorry, I meant to introduce myself; I'm your local spokesplatyp.

Just because you don't see us doesn't mean we don't exist. So in the hope that once you realise we're still around, you might do a few things to make it possible for us to exist in peace together.

I think the best way is to let you know what we Platypus need to survive and thrive.

For us (and you) to just live, number one is clean water, food and shelter. How can you help? Make sure none of your detergent, fertiliser, pesticide, herbicide, oil or anything else washes into waterways. Even if you don't have a creek on your place, all water ultimately gets into creeks, so everyone is involved. We'll do our best at our end and tell the kids not to poop in the water.

For us to actually survive long term and have a good safe home for our Pups and Grand Puggles, we need to keep bugs and critters happy into the future. For a good life, our Platy Scientist says a 30metre strip of natural scrub either side of the waterway would do. It's big enough an area to clean the water of the pollutants that wash off properties and provide a place for all critters to live and breed. What can you do? Don't mow your whole property, particularly those that mow to the creekline. Leave a nature strip of native plants to process what flows off your property. If a creek does run on your place, it's even



more important that you provide shade and native plants to shelter and protect the waterway. We platypus dig burrows in creek banks and we need strappy grassy plants to curtain and hide our burrow entrances. This means no domestic animals should access creeks directly as they trample plants, disturb the soil and muddy the waters. A couple of generations ago horses trampled my great grand platy's burrow entry, the scary story of digging his way out is still told in our family.

For us to thrive, we desperately need a quiet safe place to live. Last night, barking dogs put the missus off her food and we're worried she's not producing enough milk for our Platypups. Our youngest puggle is already underweight.

Now I'd like to ask that you stop killing us directly.

We know most of you don't mean to hurt us but please think about it. Keep your pets under control! We've had too many close calls; it's lucky we can hold our breath and hide well, but we dare not stray far from the water's edge any more.

Don't use dangerous yabbie traps. Firstly, you're taking our tucker which is bad enough but if we get caught up in those traps we drown! And my latest grumble, in one of the swim holes we've shared with you for generations, someone has decided they could simply start pumping the water out for their lawns. Doesn't sound much but they near sucked up our old Aunt, we were lucky to pull her out of the large pump inlet. Please put a filter on your pump inlet pipe.

To help, our friends at Still Creek Landcare have extended their "Trees for Weeds" program to include "Free Plants for Platypus Plantings". So give them a call for plants and advice.

For more information, contact Nick on 9653 2056, www.stillcreeklandcare.com.au email Stillcreeklandcare@iinet.net.au or Facebook.

THE STORY BEHIND MCFARLANDS GRAVE AT MAROOTA

For many years people have driven by McFarland's Grave at Maroota without giving it a second look, however some more curious folk have taken the time to stop and read the simple epitaph and wonder about the story of the poor soul buried alone along the side of busy Old Northern Road. The following report gives us the most definitive answers we are likely to get:

**EXCERPT FROM THE
MAITLAND MERCURY AND HUNTER
RIVER GENERAL ADVERTISER,
SATURDAY 3 FEB, 1872:**

SUDDEN DEATH IN THE BUSH NEAR WISEMANS FERRY

On the 18th Ultimo it was reported to the police that the body of a man had been found lying in the bush at Maroota, of which the following was the description given:-

In height he was about five feet eight inches, his build was stout, his hair black, and his clothing consisted in a black cloth coat and trousers, he had on blucher boots and a drab Californian hat.

From enquiries made at Newcastle subsequent to the holding of the inquest, there would appear to be but little doubt that the unfortunate deceased was a compositor of the name Thomas McFarlane, who was lately employed of this journal and also on the Pilot, but was discharged from both on account of intemperate habits. The verdict was an open one, no evidence having been adduced to show how the deceased came by his death, but the jury were aware of opinion that it had arisen from exposure to the sun.

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