

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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IN COMMUNITY

I'm continually delighted by the efforts and achievements of community. When adversity arrives—be it a harsh change in season or an unwanted development proposal, I'm proud to say our community see the power in working together in response. In recent months we have seen this in respect to occasions where the Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands have stepped up to participating with the community to educate, connect and protect our wonderful people and places.

Since late 2023 we have been active in the campaign against the landfill proposal in Lysterfield Valley, through the application process at council and now at VCAT where the Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands have stood alongside residents and community groups to fundraise, lobby authorities, and present our submissions in opposition to the destructive development on our doorstep. This has been a new experience for me and only with the skills and resources offered by the groups and individuals who share our interests in protecting the region and its biodiversity have we got this far. To all of you who have supported this campaign we thank you.

The Upwey–Belgrave RSL held their first Family Fun Day and Volunteer Expo on a lovely sunny Saturday in March this year, with representatives from local community groups and activities for the whole family. The day was a privilege to be part of and our stall was visited by many from Upwey and nearby neighbourhoods who share the

passion for our region's environments. These opportunities to grow our network and experience the gratitude from residents and peer groups alike for our efforts is a boost to our cause and our determination to continue the important work we do.

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the Australian Association of Bushland Regeneration (AABR) National Forum, via ticket sponsored by Yarra Ranges Council. Speakers from private and public sector, spoke on new tools, strategies, and outlooks for bushland regeneration. Resilience was a key focus for many of the presentations—where so many groups with limited resources are using a method of supporting natural regeneration as repeatable strategy in bushland recovering from land use, disasters or neglect. Attending the forum provided an opportunity to connect with friends groups, contractors, and authorities from across the nation—building a sense of the broader community we operate in, and making in clear the work we do is part of a vast effort toward enhancing the value of natural systems—like the ones we can see in Glenfern Valley Bushlands.

I thank you for being part of our community—together we are more effective powerful and resilient.

*Jackson Ellis, President FoGFVBL
Photo: Stewart Chambers*



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

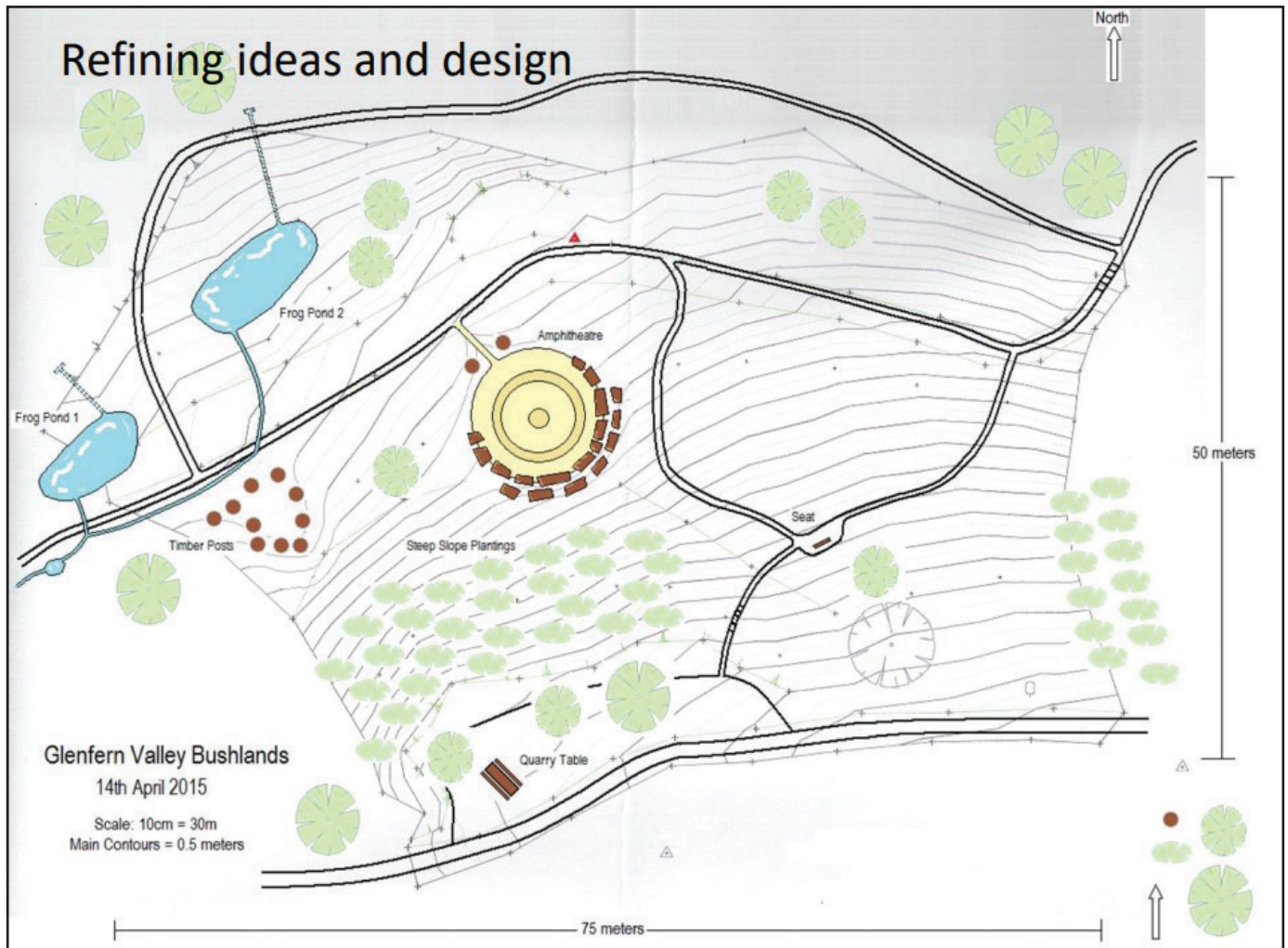
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CONSTRUCTION OF THE FROG POND

— BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME



Did you know that two weeks after the frog pond in Glenfern's Bagunggadjirri amphitheatre area was completed, the friendly croaking of the **Southern Brown Tree Frog** *Litoria ewingii* could be heard coming from new wetlands? (see back page for photo.)

The frogs breed all year round, peaking in winter and spring. Males call from the vegetation around the pond using a series of rising "crees" that are repeated between 5 and 15 times, with the first note being held the longest ("creeeeeeee creee creee").

Males call to attract females throughout the year, but more frequently and intensely after heavy rain. Females lay their eggs in jelly clumps, usually underwater, attached to submerged vegetation. The tadpoles hatch after four to six days and take between 12 and 26 weeks to turn into frogs.

How can we help them?

- Although widespread and not endangered, loss of habitat and clearing of land is a threat.
- Keep our waterways clean and free of pollution.
- Do not touch frogs and tadpoles or move them from one area to another as they are susceptible to an infectious disease caused by the chytrid fungus, which can make them sick or kill them.
- Create a frog-friendly backyard by building a pond with surrounding vegetation, composting and not using harsh chemicals.
- Keeping your dogs on a leash and out of frog ponds.

*Text: Linda Fullagar
Photo: Mike Sverns*



FROM THE SMALLEST PLANT...

There are over 20,000 known species of lichens worldwide, with over 3,000 species found in Australia.

Lichens can grow on almost any surface, including natural substrates like soil, rock, and wood, as well as man-made surfaces like bitumen, concrete, and metal. They can fix atmospheric nitrogen and contribute to nutrient cycling by absorbing mineral nutrients, and slowly contribute to making new soil.

Lichens are among the first organisms to colonize barren surfaces, preparing them for later plant colonization. They provide niches for invertebrates, which are then eaten by larger invertebrates, contributing to various food chains. Lichen can be used as an indicator of air pollution, especially pollution by sulphur dioxide. An analysis of coverage on trees or rocks can be an indicator of air quality.

Lichens are a symbiosis between a fungus and algae. The fungus provides structure and protection, while the algae photosynthesises and produces carbohydrates that the fungus harvests. The fungi and algae together make more than 800 different substances, many of which aren't found anywhere else in nature and can't be made from only the algae or the fungi, so together they're more than the sum of their parts!

Notes: D. Jackson. Photos: M. Thomas



... TO THE LARGEST



One of my favourite pleasures at Glenfern is to look up and marvel at the sheer beauty of the trees. Along Ferry Creek, the tall white-trunked trees are the famed Manna Gums, so loved by koalas.

These magnificent trees grow in cool shady areas, and provide a dense canopy to protect the ground below, as well as supporting a host of native animals. Small possums will travel from tree to tree, climbing out to the end of the branches and leaping to the next one. They often brim with bird life, attracted to the edible white sap (or manna), and the insects that feed on it. When the branches fall, it eventually forms a hollow, providing nesting spaces for anything from bees to gliders to owls.

The leaves are long, and hang loosely from the outer branchlets. The distinctive cross-shaped clusters of three buds and fruits are often a defining feature. Look also for the long ribbony bark that has caught in the branch junctions, or tossed messily at the base.

Taking the time to recognise and acknowledge our trees adds much to my experience of walking Glenfern's tracks. Their individual and collective beauty are indeed wonderful highlights of the Reserve we call Glenfern. Enjoy!

Andrew F.

The Glenfern

WORKING BEE SCHEDULE 2024

Restoration Morning • Sun 21st April, 9:30 am
Conservation Conversation • Wed 1st May, 9 am
Restoration Morning Sun • 19th May, 9:30 am
Conservation Conversation • Wed 5th June, 9 am
Restoration Morning • Sun 16th June, 9:30 am
Conservation Conversation • Wed 3rd July, 9 am
Restoration Morning • Sun 21st July, 9:30 am
Conservation Conversation • Wed 7th August, 9 am
Restoration Morning • Sun 18th August, 9:30 am
Conservation Conversation • Wed 4th Sept, 9 am
Restoration Morning • Sun 15th Sept, 9:30 am
Conservation Conversation • Wed 2nd Oct, 9 am
Member's Day • Sun 27th Oct, 9:30 am (T.B.C.)
Conservation Conversation • Wed 6th Nov, 9 am
Restoration Morning • Sun 17th Nov, 9:30 am
Conservation Conversation Wed 4th Dec, 9 am

Sunday working bee 9:30 am–12:30 pm,
Mid week 9.00–11.00 am.

Meet at the central car park, Glenfern Road, Upwey. Bring a water bottle, strong shoes, and gloves. Tools and morning tea provided.

Come and join us to help restore the bushlands while learning more about local flora and fauna. See our Facebook page for more info about working bees and tree planting days.

**PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE AS
SCHEDULING DEPENDS ON WEATHER
AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS.**

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SOUTHERN BROWN TREE FROG

They are only a small frog, about 45mm long, and have a brown back, yellowy thighs, a white belly, with a black stripe from their snout to the arm and often have a white stripe from below the eye to the end of their upper lip. Fingers are unwebbed but their toes are half webbed. They have smooth skin with small bumps. If you look closely at the eye, you can see that the iris is goldy coloured with a horizontal pupil.

The Southern Brown Tree Frog feeds mainly on flying insects such as mosquitoes, moths and flies, and can leap about a metre to catch insects mid-flight. Having sticky toes makes them great climbers too.

Photo: Mike Sverns



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Forest to Foreshore, Kallista

Bushland Management and Ecological Restoration

And thanks to Melbourne Water and Shire of Yarra Ranges for their services

We continue to welcome a high number of visitors to the reserve, please remember to take your rubbish home and have your dogs on leads to keep all our animals happy. Thank you.