

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of The Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

Edition No. 39 Spring/Summer 2016

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello Glenfernians and welcome to latest edition of *The Glenfern*.

Did you know we have over 100 financial members of the Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands, including individuals and families? This truly indicates a fantastic level of community support. We have about 20 volunteers who participate in various working bees and activities in the reserve. This group of active volunteers do an amazing amount of work. We cannot thank them enough for the time, skill and dedication to the job. Glenfern would not exist without them! In fact we could always do with more active volunteers as we have so many worthwhile projects on the go and we are feeling a little stretched. Please get in touch if you feel you have time or talent that you could share with Glenfern Valley Bushlands.

The Glenfern project has now been going for 15 years. Few would have imagined just how much could be achieved. The reserve has been transformed from a

weed infested dumping ground to one of the best bushland reserves in the Yarra Ranges Council.

We have our AGM each October and that starts a new year for the group. Please renew your membership to keep the project forging ahead. It has been a great privilege to be a part of the Glenfern Valley Bushlands Committee and I look forward to another year of working with the team. This report is being written ahead of the AGM, so we will report on outcomes in a subsequent issue of the Newsletter.

Our new Management Plan which is now fully drafted and will be published in coming months. Andrew and Linda deserve special thanks for the time they have put into this project. The new plan will guide Glenfern at least until the mid 2020s.

Our amazing stone amphitheatre is proving to be a great hit. We were recently there in the evening with the First Upwey Cub Scouts. There is

a terrific ambiance there, be it day or night.

Our pittosporum clearing project is up and running and will make a dramatic difference to the reserve. We are going to take every opportunity to tackle any remaining pittosporum. The day the last pittosporum is taken out of Glenfern will be grandest day of all. We think that can be done in the just a couple of years. It seemed almost beyond imagination that we could get rid of all the pittosporum when the project began 15 years ago.

Have you been to see the tadpoles in the new pond? It has been a brilliant success and is full of tadpoles within months of being built. Nature is powerful; we just have to give it a chance.

Glenfern Valley Bushlands is in great shape. Thank you to our Committee, volunteers and our supporters. On a sunny day, take a walk there; it will always bring you joy.

David Moncrieff



Plenty of tadpoles can be seen in the second frog pond



Upwey Scouts checking out the taddies



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

P.O. Box 1283, Upwey, Victoria 3158 • glenfernvalleybushlands@hotmail.com • www.glenfernvalleybushlands.org.au

GLENFERN CHIPS AWAY AT THE PITTOSPORUM MENACE

The Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands has launched a new campaign to remove the invasive Sweet Pittosporum from our 40 hectare reserve at Upwey. Pittosporum is regarded as one of the biggest problem

environmental weeds in the Dandenong Ranges; at one time our reserve was half covered in dense Pittosporum thickets. This Pittosporum clearing project is targeting the remaining thickets at the eastern end of the reserve. Glenfern



The all-terrain chipper on site in the reserve.

Valley Bushlands secured \$34,450 to remove Pittosporum and \$600 to revegetate the area. The funding is from the Dandenong Ranges Environmental and Bushfire Reduction Grants program. The Friends group have been removing woody weeds from Glenfern since 2002. Over these years of restoration work the group has gained an in-depth understanding on how to remove woody weeds like Pittosporum and then regenerate the bushland. While the immediate results look stark we know from our previous campaigns that the bushland will rebound in just a couple of years. After removing the Pittosporum thicket the pre-existing Valley Grassy Forest ecosystem will be restored. The current project has already liberated a rare stand of yellow box. An important benefit of removing this heavy infestation of Pittosporum is that it reduces the fire fuel load in the reserve. Our grant application was supported by the Upwey CFA and the Yarra Ranges Council. Need more info, please visit our Facebook or Website. This project is supported by the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.



BLUE TONGUE LIZARD...

This baby Blue Tongue was discovered in the reserve during a mid-week working bee. Luckily he avoided the whipper snipper and was carefully picked up and placed away from the action. The Eastern Blue-tongue (*Tiliqua scincoides*) belongs to the skink family of lizards. They are very common along the eastern regions of Australia. They can grow to 30 centimetres or more and have been known to live for more than 30 years; they are some of the largest skinks in the world.

They make themselves at home in thick, low growing vegetation and will often take up residence in disused burrows. This baby blue tongue would have been carried in his mother's body in a thin shelled egg and then born, fully developed. Blue tongues are referred to as live-bearers and can produce a large litter of up to 18 young.

These lizards are omnivorous and their diet can include such things as fruit, flowers, birds' eggs, insects and even baby mice if they cross paths. The broad flat blue tongue flicks in and out of their large mouth to pick up on chemical cues in their environment to aid in finding food and sensing danger.

The Blue tongue, being cold blooded, enjoys sunbaking at every opportunity. This unfortunately can have dire consequences as roadways provide a tempting and convenient location. Although this tends to kill a number of them they are not under threat of extinction. Glenfern Valley reserve provides a great sanctuary for this species so hopefully they will continue to thrive.



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS...



Fairhills High senior students

Over the past few months the reserve has provided opportunities for local schools and scout groups to get involved in understanding and caring for the environment. Senior students from Fairhills High enjoyed participating in removing old sleeves and stakes from mature plants in Area 9 and learned about how the reserve is managed. The Upwey Scouts made a determined effort to spread the huge piles mulch around the New Road end. The result was fantastic and they finished it off by putting in some new plants too.



Upwey Scouts and leaders spreading the mulch.

NEST BOX SCHEME

Glenfern has set a new special group with a focus on birds. The first project is a nest box scheme; we had six Rosella, six Sugar Glider, six Micro Bat and three Kookaburra boxes made for us by Belgrave Men's Shed.

Natural nest holes for birds and mammals are disappearing fast through humans encroaching on their habitat, storm damage to trees and the added competition from introduced species. Trees need to be between 100 to 150 years old to have the right size hole for a number of species. This is why we decided to introduce a nest box scheme, which will enable us to monitor more closely the problems and successes of our target species.

We have to carefully choose where to place the boxes, placing them in the right habitat where they have a food source close by, reducing the risk of territorial fights, predation and out of the prevailing wind and direct sunlight, (to reduce the risk of hard boiled eggs!!!). David, Marleen and Anne have already been on a 7.30am walk and tentatively marked 6 trees.

We are hoping to purchase a camera on a long pole so we can monitor the boxes. At a later stage we would like to be able to fit at least one box with a remote camera that could be linked to our website which would hopefully be of interest to everyone. This is a great project for the group and the community. It provides yet more opportunity for educational tours of the reserve. Please feel welcome to join in.

Insects also appreciate having places to nest too. Marilyn recently looked into making 'insect hotels' that can also be created for the home garden to attract beneficial insects. A simple construction of used planting tubes filled with various materials that provide cavities for the insects is one example.



Jim Warmington and Mike Sverns with the new nest boxes



A range of 'insect hotels' using different materials



The Glenfern

WORKING BEE DIARY

up to June 2017

- * Saturday November 19th
- * Sunday February 19th.
- * Saturday March 18th.
- * Sunday April 23rd
- * Saturday May 20th
- * Sunday June 18th

Meet at the central car park,
Glenfern Road, Upwey Melway Map 74 G10
9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. (Morning Tea 11-ish)

Members, Committee and interested supporters meet on-site to take part in weeding, planting and talks about indigenous plants, animals and weed ID.



EVERYONE IS WELCOME.

Bring a water bottle and depending on the weather, a hat or wet weather gear. Please wear long pants and sensible shoes/boots.

In the event of a Fire Ban or inclement weather the working bee will be cancelled.

DETAILS OF EACH WORKING BEE CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK.

By being a financial member of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands, you enable the group to gain valuable Funding Grants to finance works in the reserve.

If you would like to become a financial member, please download the membership form from our website at:
www.glenfernvalleybushlands.org.au

Membership is only: \$5 Concession, \$10 Individual, \$15 Family or \$50 for a business sponsor.
Three year memberships are now also available.

ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL DISCOVERY IN THE RESERVE...



Pandorea Pandorana, commonly known as the Wonga Vine. This Spring has seen the abundant flowering of this beautiful native vine throughout the reserve.

MID WEEK INITIATIVE CONSERVATION AND CONVERSATION

First WEDNESDAY of the month, 9–11am.
Meet at the central car park on Glenfern Road.

CORPORATE SPONSORS:

UniPrint Pty Ltd

13 Edinburgh Street, Oakleigh South 3167

Printer of this newsletter

Call 9543 7677 for all your printing needs.

Native Vegetation Management

Armin Korchan Ph 5968 3297

Or: armin@weedsmart.com.au

Photos: David Moncrieff, Anne Comer, Linda Fullagar and Sharon Twining.



Visit our Facebook page for up-to-date information and befriend us!

We are troubled by the amount of rubbish being dumped on the perimeter of the reserve recently.

PLEASE report rubbish dumping to:
Shire of Yarra Ranges
Ph: 1300 368 333

Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

• P.O. Box 1283, Upwey, Victoria 3158 • glenfernvalleybushlands@hotmail.com • www.glenfernvalleybushlands.org.au



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.