

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

Edition No. 42 Summer /Autumn 2018-19

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Friends have worked on our much-loved Glenfern project for 17 years and I can report that the original conservation ideas of the reserve remain strong and the need for a large easily accessible public reserve have only become more apparent over these years.

A few of the highlights are —

- Glenfern is now funded to remove the remaining Sweet Pittosporum thickets from the reserve. That will happen in March 2019 with the help of a \$17,000 grant from DELWP.
- Forest Park Reserve, now under our care for the last couple of years, is now in good shape.
- Glenfern continues to host student educational programs. We had yet another 100-student contingent from Trinity College this year.
- Glenfern sponsored an environmental educational session for our volunteers.
- Glenfern has been recognized by Melbourne Water by an Exceptional Contribution Award.

We still have challenges. Glenfern has suffered in the last 12 months due to unseasonably dry and an abnormally warm weather. Many of our plantings from the last couple years have failed over summer. Some hundreds of mature trees, particularly narrow leaf peppermints, and middle storey plants have been lost across the reserve.

I would particularly like to thank our Committee who carry the work load that comes with running an active not-for-profit group. There is a long list of activities that support the group; Newsletter, Memberships, Secretary, Treasurer, Working-bee coordination, Public Officer, Website, Facebook, minutes, weed maps, first aid training, morning tea talks, photographs, doing the volunteer work



at Glenfern, and providing fantastic morning teas. The many tasks done by the Committee all deserve our special thanks. We are always looking for additional younger volunteers to help with our conservation work and running the Friends' group.

Glenfern is special. We have a great team.

- David Moncrief....report from the October AGM

FAIRHILLS STUDENTS GET STUCK INTO THE ENVIRONMENT...

In early September an enthusiastic group of Outdoor Education students visited the reserve to experience and contribute to their understanding of how and why the environment is vital to everyone's wellbeing and the health of both flora and fauna. Although their visit only lasted a couple of hours they gained a valuable insight into the workings of the reserve and then got stuck in to helping spread mulch on a recently planted area at the quarry site. It was a great effort by all involved on fairly steep ground.



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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Outdoor education students from Fairhills High School with staff and volunteers.

POWERFUL OWLS IN OUR BUSHLAND RESERVE

It was an anxious wait – but she is back!!

A few months ago, DELWP Wildlife Officers were made aware of an injured Powerful Owl found in Alfred Street, Ferntree Gully. Through the community network, we were made aware of this unfortunate incident. The concern for us was it may have been the female from our local pair, it certainly was within its home range. Unfortunately, this bird died after it eventually was delivered to the Australian Wildlife Health Centre, located at Healesville Sanctuary.

It's great to see threatened species, such as Powerful Owls co-habiting the urban fringe, but unfortunately they sometimes fall victim to hitting powerlines and car windows, whilst hunting their prey at night. Caring for unique bird species can be tricky so it is important to know what to do if you find a sick or injured threatened bird so that you it can get the help it needs as soon as possible.

Here are some basic steps:

- 1) Catch, restrain and secure the bird in a towel or blanket
- 2) House the bird in a ventilated cardboard box
- 3) Place it somewhere dark and quiet, till you make an alternative arrangement for its care and rehabilitation

Make sure you get it to a specialist experienced in treating threatened or unique birds, such as the Australian Wildlife Health Centre or an Avian Specialist. Powerful Owls are apex predators and generally are monogamous (that is they pair for life), so it's important that these unique birds received specialist attention within 48 hours of its discovery.

The Ferny Creek female eluded us for a few anxious weeks, post this discovery, but eventually appeared with her long-time partner. Let's hope they have a successful breeding season this year!

The young Powerful Owls picture fledged this year in early September.



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INSPIRING MORNING WITH DARCY

On a beautiful October morning, Darcy Duggan, the guru of environmental land management, visited Glenfern to share his knowledge and passion. He spoke of the need to understand our place, physically and biologically, in the nature of things. We must be aware of our geological roots to make sense of our Reserve's development and struggles. He related this to the recent harsh summers which have taken their toll on many trees, particularly Narrow Leaf Peppermints. Is this part of the evolutionary change to differing plant communities? How should we respond?

For many of us, it's quite depressing to see beautiful trees succumbing to drought stress, or perhaps in combination with root disease. Glenfern's trees are virtually all regrowth after clearing for grazing and cropping in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Perhaps this is part of a thinning process to knock out those less capable of

surviving long term, particularly as climate changes.

Should we re-plant? If so, with what varieties? Such questions challenge our knowledge, but inspire us to persevere in this rewarding project.

As we continued down tracks towards Ferny Creek, Darcy was amazed by the transformational improvement since his last visit. The removal of vast numbers of woody and other weeds have allowed dramatic natural rehabilitation. A thoroughly denser under-storey now provides essential habitat to birds, possums, reptiles and insects. The bush feels more alive. Our spirits are lifted.

Thank you, Darcy, for sharing your knowledge and we look forward to your next visit — perhaps next year.

-Andrew F



NEST BOXES ARE NOW INSTALLED AND WAITING FOR OCCUPANTS

Earlier in the year the sites were chosen for the installation of the various nest boxes. It is pleasing to report that all the boxes are now placed and waiting for their particular resident to take up the offer of accommodation.



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WORKING BEE SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY - JULY 2019

- Wednesday 6th February
- **Sunday February 17th - Area 9**
- Wednesday 6th March
- **Saturday March 17th- Area 7**
- Wednesday 4th April
- **Sunday April 14th - Area 13**
- Wednesday 1st May
- **Saturday May 18th - Areas 4 and 5**
- Wednesday 5 June
- **Sunday June 16th - Areas 2 and 12**
- Wednesday 3rd July
- **Saturday July 20th - Area 6**

Meet at the central car park, Glenfern Road, Upwey
Melway Map 74 G10

Wednesday Working bee 9am-11am

Weekend Working bee 9.30am-12.30pm

Members, Committee and interested supporters 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 WEB SITE
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.

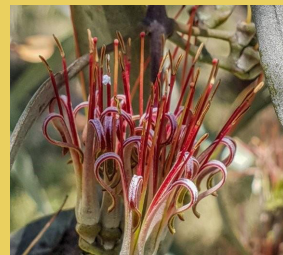
Three year memberships and now also available.

REFERENCE LIBRARY FOR MEMBERS

The Friends group has a range of books and articles that are available for borrowing. The list is available on the website with details about how to contact Luke and borrow items.

THE GREY MISTLETOE

This is just one of the varieties of mistletoe found in our reserve. It flowers most of the year and its upright blooms attract birds and insects. Australia has around 90 endemic species of mistletoe. Often considered a parasite plant it does have a role in maintaining ecosystems; in undisturbed bushland it not only provides a food source for possums, gliders and certain butterfly larvae but is also a safe haven for nesting birds.



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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

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