

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

Edition No. 43 Winter 2019

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Has our weather changed? The reality is that we may be seeing signs of climate change right here in our reserve. The weather has been unusually dry and warm over the last 18 months. Rainfall in Victoria during 2018 was about 25% below average while the temperature was 1.14 degrees warmer. Our local area had less than half its normal rainfall from the first four months of this year and the temperature remained 1.15 degrees warmer than normal. The grim fact is that many hundreds of mature Peppermints died over this long dry and warm spell. We have also lost understory from plantings we have undertaken over the last couple of years. The above average rainfall in May, June and July has finally given relief to our reserve and stressed trees.

Glenfern is not the only reserve experiencing tree loss, it is happening across Victoria. Ecologists are already trialling planting seedlings sourced from warmer parts of Australia to revegetate forests in central Victoria. Seedlings from places in NSW like Griffith, Deniliquin which have a much hotter, drier climate are being trialled in Nardoo Hills near Bendigo.

The Glenfern team has been busy! Visit the reserve to see our progress: pittosporum removal, new tree planning, and new work in the old quarry. Great results. Our Volunteers are doing a wonderful job and we thank them for commitment.

David Moncrieff, President

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A GRANT MAKES!

Back in 2001, an enthusiastic newly-formed Friends Group organised a working bee. Before them stood thousands of Boneseed, Blackberries and most confrontingly, Sweet Pittosporum. For a Friends Group, forty hectares was a large Reserve to tackle, especially when it was the local dumping ground for car bodies and builders' rubbish.

WHERE TO START?

We secured a large initial grant from the State Government which funded the Management Plan and perimeter fencing. The latter ensured no more rubbish could be dumped inside! The Management Plan provided important guidance over the years that followed with insightful aims and an early snapshot of conditions, threats and features.

There was some expert knowledge in the Group, with many keen to learn, and others happy to put in solid hours of work. The Friends of Glenfern Group has maintained strong camaraderie throughout the years. Attention to the group itself by our leaders, has remained a continuing priority.

Melbourne Water have been a wonderful ally through grant support for more than a decade. So much of the Ferny Creek corridor has

transformed from weedy mess to quality riparian forest. Yarra Ranges Council with their extraordinarily helpful staff have provided continuous assistance through financial aid and educational courses.

StopPitt also came to our timely assistance, with a large grant which allowed us to clear a sizeable chunk of Pittosporum jungle. So where are we now? We're delighted that Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) saw fit to reward us with another generous grant of \$17,000. This would be sufficient to clear the remaining two hectares, with allowance for some regenerative planting. We'd hoped to have it all cleared by June 2019, but we have been stymied by the difficult terrain, and hazardous conditions. But we are so close!

Disappointment turned to celebration when Yarra Ranges Council agreed to fund the final small piece of Pitto removal. This will occur in early September, and we can't wait to symbolically cut the last Pittosporum that we have marked specially.

This is a wonderful environmental and community success story, which has taken nearly twenty years to play out. Melbourne Water, Yarra Ranges Council, DELWP, Friends and many helpers have achieved a massive turn-around, from eyesore to oasis. Thank you all!



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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SMILE—YOU'RE ON CAMERA!

During May the Shire of Yarra Ranges offered to install several motion sensor cameras around the reserve to check on wildlife. Seven cameras were securely locked to trees, about 60cm above ground level, and a bait made of nuts, seeds and honey was left in a plastic holder about a metre in front. After two weeks, the cameras were collected and any photos downloaded from the memory cards. We got several good pictures of our local fauna, including wallabies—one with a joey—various birds, possums, and non-native species like foxes and rabbits, plus a few curious humans as well. You can see the photos on our website www.glenfernvalleybushlands.org.au



BOOBOOK ENCOUNTER

Recently Mike, local Glenfern birder, had a brief encounter with this small brown hawk-owl.

It was seen near Ferny Creek Track on the ground just before dark. It then flew to a low branch and flew into a pitto thicket, where a few quick photos were taken.

The Southern Boobook (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) is well known for its double 'boo-book' call. The Boobook is listed on Glenfern's bird list, but is occasionally heard and rarely seen. Two Boobooks were heard calling to each other back in April or May. A well-known birding site has a report dated in August 2006, where at dusk a Boobook was sighted hunting insects in the tree tops.

Please share your Boobook encounters with us, so we can understand more about the Boobook and its dependence on our reserve.



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GLENFERN JOINS THE FIGHT AGAINST WANDERING TRAD (*TRADESCANTIA FLUMENENSIS*)

Friends groups along Ferny Creek in Upwey are taking on the invasive weed, Wandering Trad. The CSIRO recently released a fungal biological agent to control wandering trad around the Dandenong Ranges. After years of research to confirm that it only works on this specific weed which originally hails from Brazil. The Friends of Thompson Road, Upwey South Reserve and Glenfern Valley Bushlands have worked with Dr Ben Gooden from the CSIRO to release this fungus along Ferny Creek in Upwey.

The Friends groups are keen to find out if biological control solution is an efficient way to avoid laborious hand weeding or using herbicides in ecological sensitive areas. Even if the Trad is only checked it will give native vegetation a chance to compete and promote native biodiversity.

The Friends groups were provided with training and guidelines to ensure the best chances of being able to introduce the leaf fungus into the infestation of wandering trad along Ferny Creek. The CSIRO and Yarra Ranges Council are providing a number demonstrating

sessions to ensure that is biological control agent has every chance of success.

The method of release is easy to do, using infected leaves to spread the fungus spores. The fungus spores enter the leaves through tiny openings on the underside of the leaves. Contact one of the local Friends groups for more information.



Photo: Heather Liney (Friends of Thompson Road Reserve), Ben Gooden (CSIRO), David Moncrieff (Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands) and Ian Rainbow (Friends of Upwey South Reserve)



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WORKING BEE SCHEDULE AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2019

- Sunday 18 August — Area 3 & 14
- Saturday 21 September — Area 15
- **Wednesday 2 October**
- **Sunday 20 October — Member's Day — All Welcome!**
- **Wednesday 6th November**
- Saturday 16 November — Area 10 & 11

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.

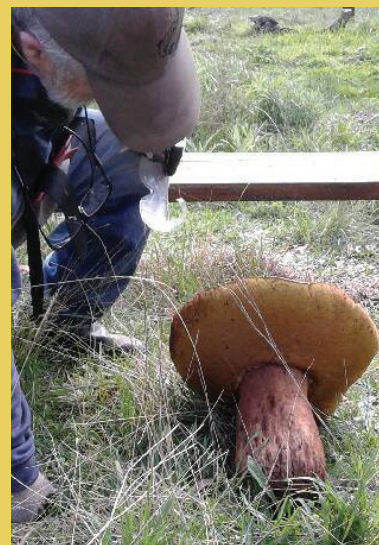
Three year memberships and now also available.

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 fungus is a *Boletus*

This giant mushroom was found at our last working bee. Unfortunately, by the end of the day someone had taken it away. Mushrooms and fungi are important for breaking down dead plant material, so please leave them to do their work!



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Native Vegetation Management

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Or: armin@weedsmart.com.au

Photos: Edie Tate, Mike Sverns, research/csiro.au

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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