

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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HAPPY 21st BIRTHDAY GLENFERN!

21 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATION

This year the Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands celebrates its 21st birthday, and we have a tremendous amount to celebrate.

For the 133 years leading up to the year 2000, the bushlands site was under occupation of the early European settlers, dairy farmers, a stone quarry, and a barrage of four-wheel-drivers / dirt-bike riders, each leaving their mark on the country. So, in 2001 when the Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands was formed by an assembly of interested and energetic locals, the bushlands looked very different to the beautiful space we enjoy today.

We have the vision and enthusiasm of the earlier member of the Friends Group to thank for removing dozens of car bodies plus 68 cubic metres of rubbish, installing kilometres of perimeter fencing, undertaking thousands of hours of invasive plant species removal. Our volunteers have been the powerhouse of the transformation, successfully completing hundreds of working bees,

planting days, educational walks, and public events – all building the value and reputation of the Bushlands.

Through the careful planning and collaboration with our major stakeholders; Yarra Ranges Council, Melbourne Water and our valued contractors, the Friends Group have facilitated, among many other achievements:

- Rehabilitation of the quarry site into the picturesque amphitheatre, picnic area and frog ponds which attracts visitors from far and wide.
- Removal of a forest of Sweet Pittosporum covering much of the reserve, by engaging industry leading processes.
- Constructing a network of management and walking tracks through the reserve.
- Welcoming a diversity of visitors to the reserve from ecology PhD students to local Indigenous Elders, to State Government Ministers.

While much of the reserve has been transformed over the past two decades, some things remain the same. We maintain the goals of the Friends Group with gusto, *Protecting and enhancing natural values, providing safe and compatible recreation opportunities, involving the community in the reserve, ensuring sound and sustainable management.* There is always room for community participation within this scope for anybody who is interested.

I am very proud of this long list of achievements and the current health of the Friends Group, which currently holds 80+ financial members and regularly sees 15+ volunteers at working bees. However, we have some new challenges ahead, which will require novel solutions. At present we are experiencing an invasion of Canary Grass (Phalaris) encroaching into the reserve from neighbouring farmland and are adapting bushland management strategies to cope with a changing climate. In another 21 years I'd hope to see an equally committed Friends Group celebrating another long list of achievements. We welcome all to partake in this ongoing journey.

J Ellis



Diurus Photo: D Jackson



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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SPRING FLOWERS



Chocolate Lily



Rice Flower



Snowy Daisy Bush



Creeping Bossiaea



Milkmaid



Twining Glycine



Love Creeper



Wonga Vine



Tall Sundew

Thanks to Linda F, Daniel J and Paul D for the photos



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PITTO CLEARING – A PROBLEM TOO BIG FOR US

When the Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands group began caring for the reserve in 2001, one of the major problems was that large areas were covered mostly with Sweet Pittosporum. Originally a tree species from further south and east, Pittosporum has been advancing in the Dandenongs for some years.

This medium sized, heavily leaved tree has a tendency to grow in dense clumps, and will block both rain and sunlight from getting through. As a result, they form a monoculture with very little understory, and can spread into grassy areas, and choke out smaller native plants. It is also highly flammable as the green leaves catch fire easily.

As the clearing job was too big for a volunteer group, we have been fortunate in receiving several grants from DELWP Federal Government to hire contractors to do the work. One of the first areas was below Wallaby Walk, down to the creek. The trees were felled, then mulched and the chips left as ground cover. This kept the ground moist, and after the first year, smaller trees and bushes began to grow back. Established trees could thrive, and that area is now one of the most diverse in the reserve.

In 2017, a grant for Bushfire Fireload Reduction enabled us to clear the remaining area between Hill Track and the depot. This area turned out to have a large population of Yellow Box in amongst the pittos, which was once a common tree in the area but has mostly been cleared for farming. With a thick layer of wood chips on the ground, and filtered sunlight coming through the Yellow Box leaves, the understory of native grasses, Forest Nightshade and Hop Goodenia is thriving.

Pittosporums come as male and female, with the females having the berries. Mature trees can be difficult to remove due to their size, so if you want to reduce pittos in your yard, take out the ones with berries first. Or, just prune back the branches to allow the sun to come through. The seeds are spread by birds eating the berries, and seedlings often grow under other trees where birds roost and drop the seeds. These can be pulled up by hand before they are established.

A good replacement to plant instead is Blackwood, with dense growth of thick leaves, or Elderberry Panax in shady areas. These trees attract native birds and possums, and live in harmony with native plants.

M Thomas



Photo: M Thomas



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WORKING BEE SCHEDULE SPRING 2022

Conservation Conversation • Wednesday 5th October

Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands AGM

• Thursday 13th October

7:00pm – please bring a plate for supper.

Members' Day – 21st Birthday

• Sunday 23rd October – Bushland Walks & Talks

Conservation Conversation

• Wednesday 2nd November

Bushland Restoration • Sunday 20th November

Sunday working bee 9:30am–12:30pm, mid week 9–11am. 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.**



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.

Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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GLENFERN INSPIRES DEEP LISTENING

The amphitheatre at Glenfern Valley Bushlands provided the perfect location for Ash Dargan, a Larrakia man, living on Wurundjeri country to introduce the indigenous spiritual practice of Dadirri.

Dadirri is inner deep listening, quietness, and awareness. It's a way of contemplating, slowing down and really listening to your inner self and the environment around us. Just being.

Ash, who consults at Mullum Mullum Gathering Place in Croydon, led the group slowly and gently through some Dadirri practises which he complimented with his skilful playing of the didgeridoo and indigenous flute. Afterwards, we passed around a beautifully crafted 'talking stick' and shared our Dadirri experience. Most of us felt calmer and more in touch with ourselves, our ancestors, and the world around us.

Thank you to the Hills Walking Together for putting on this enjoyable event. There are two more Dadirri sessions being held at Glenfern Valley Bushlands on Sunday 9th October and 13th November. For bookings see:

<https://hillswalkingtogether.org.au/whats happeningnews>

L Fullagar

Photo: L Fullagar



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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.



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