To conserve and enhance the diversity of native flora and fauna of the Glenfern Valley Bushlands while preserving community access and encouraging education and compatible uses for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc. Edition No. 52 2025

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The sounds and scents of spring are in the air, and we are thankful for the turning of the season in the reserve and across some of ventures the of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands.

Earlier this year our Vice President Tim Edwards coordinated with Yarra Ranges Council, the acquisition of new nest boxes for the bushlands. The planning work, selection of suitable nest boxes and installation were completed in June with twelve nest boxes. You can read a bit more about this project overleaf. We anticipate the arrival of new feathered or furry families in these boxes this season and encourage you to quietly observe from a distance when you are next in the bushlands.

Since September 2023 we have been engaged with the planning process as objectors to the development application for a landfill site in Lysterfield Valley. The refusal of the planning permit by Yarra Ranges Council and Melbourne Water was contested at VCAT over the past two years. During this process Glenfern has been party to the case and has made several submissions presenting the concerns and interest of our community group and the local environment. On September 16th the hearing concluded with conditions discussions and closing submissions after nearly thirty days of hearings. The Tribunal is now in the process of making their determination, and I am hopeful the right outcome will be presented in the coming months.

Recently our trusted contractors Forest to Foreshore completed the Ferny Creek planting project which is part of the 2025 Melbourne Water funded works. We are grateful for the skilled work of Roger and his team who have prepared the sites and planted 420 indigenous plants suited to our riparian corridor. These plants have been selected and placed to supplement the creek side canopy, mid and lower storeys to boost the habitat value and protect the creek banks. You may have noticed the sturdy guards installed to defend the juvenile plants from hungry wallabies and feral deer.

In August we enjoyed an afternoon in the bushlands with a group of year 11 students from Albert Park College. The VCE Outdoor Education class were interested in the work of the friends group, bushland regeneration projects, contemporary and Indigenous land management practices. It was uplifting to see the depth of interest and genuine enquiry of the next generation of custodians looking for their ways to contribute to conservation of our local environment in the future.

Jackson Ellis
(President)

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NEST BOX PROJECT 2025

Nest Box Install, photo by Jackson Ellis

The formation of natural nesting hollows in mature trees provides essential habitat for birds, bats, reptiles and arboreal marsupials which play key roles in bushland ecology. Many of these animals travel beyond the edges of the reserve to forage, hunt and find a mate but rely on bushlands like Glenfern where suitable habitat trees for their day time homes or seasonal nesting are protected. The natural attrition of mature trees through storms and environmental stresses gradually diminishes the availability of nesting hollows, and so to support the sustainable populations for our resident wildlife, artificial nest boxes are installed. These nest boxes have been designed and constructed to specific dimensions to emulate the types of hollows our target species, in this case; Kreft's (or Sugar) gliders, microbats, possums, kookaburras and parrots.

In June this year a team of contractors from Treetech and Yarra Ranges Council Bushlands department arrived with a ute load of nest boxes. Thanks to the mapping and tree selection of Mike Sverns and others, we had a number of locations preselected with target species in mind. The contractors spent the day installing twelve nest boxes to the selected trees, carefully choosing the orientation, height and distribution to suit the preferences of the target species for each box. As the skilled tree climbers scaled the tree trunks then hoisted and fixed the nest boxes, the locations and details were recorded to guide future monitoring of the newly installed habitat. Witnessing this operation was very impressive.

Jackson Ellis

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN THE BURN AREA?

Post Burn Sundew

Post Burn View

The burned area at the south-west corner of the reserve is continuing to regenerate, despite a very dry winter. Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands and Yarra Ranges Council continue to monitor and intervene in 'Area 2' where necessary following the December 2024 burn.

The below-average rainfall hasn't stopped indigenous plants such as wattles, gums and sundews from germinating. Some of the bushes and trees that we'd feared dead have been resprouting. However, there are still large patches of bare soil that are being slowly colonised by mosses, fungi, and unfortunately weedy grasses.

A mob of kangaroos regularly grazes the newly sprouted grasses. However, one of the objectives of the burn was to encourage regrowth of indigenous plants. That means newly sprouted seedlings need protection from roos, wallabies, deer and rabbits to help them survive and be 'recruited' into the ecosystem.

Council officers have been identifying key plant species (not easy when they've only just sprouted!) and erecting small cages around them to give them a chance.

Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushland volunteers have been pulling weeds such as nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*), rats tail grass (*Sporobulus sp.*) and Paterson's curse (*Echium plantagineum*). Council has also been slashing and spraying larger areas of rats tail, grassy weeds and unburnt edges of the burn area, where weeds were sadly not affected by the fire.

Council officers have also been monitoring the 3 trial plots, where the growth of plants is showing the benefit of having been fenced off for 9 months.

If you'd like to have a look at the burned area yourself, it's the parcel of land bounded by Glenfern Ridge Track, Farm Track and Manna Gum Track. To find it, turn left immediately after entering the main gate on Glenfern Road and walk for a few minutes.

While we continue to tend to Area 2, it's likely that there will be burns in Areas 4 and 5 this Spring. These areas are in the parcel of land bounded by Ridge Track, Hill Track, Serge's Track and Wallaby Track. The burns will be 'cool' environmental and cultural burns carried out by Yarra Ranges.

T Edwards

A RARE VISITOR

A pair of Spotted Pardalotes have been seen over the past few weeks, returning to their ground burrow with nest material. Most times, it's thin shreds of bark and grass. This male must be flying across Glenfern Road to collect the cattle hair from the fence or directly from the cattle.

The Spotted Pardalote's nest is an enlarged, lined chamber at the end of narrow tunnel, excavated in an earth bank. Sometimes they nest in tree hollows and occasionally in artificial structures. Both parents share nest-building, incubation of the eggs and feeding of the young when they hatch.

This season, a single Male was spotted back in May along Wallaby Track. Normally a pair would be seen at the intersection of Ridge and Hill Tracks. This male was observed feeding mainly on tiny insects, caterpillar (of the Common Brown Butterfly) and once feasted on a Mole Cricket. The Spotted Pardalote is largely sedentary, but may undergo local seasonal movements away from higher elevations in autumn/winter. This pair may have returned to Glenfern for the spring and summer.

M Thomas, Photo M Sverns

The Glenfern

WORKING BEE SCHEDULE
SPRING 2025

Conservation Conversation • Wed 8th October, 9:00 am
Restoration Morning • Sun 19th October, 9:30 am

AGM • Thur 9th October, 7:00pm • All Members Welcome
Guest speaker from YRC Bushlands Team

Conservation Conversation • Wed 5th November, 9:00 am
Restoration Morning • Sun 16th November, 9:30 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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DROSERA: JEWEL OF THE BUSH

Droseras, commonly known as Sundews, are found on every continent except Antarctica, and whose beauty disguises an intriguing less glamorous lifestyle.

They are fascinating plants as they lure, capture and digest insects using the sticky 'dew' exuded from their leaves. We are excited to see some emerging from the environmental burn site at Glenfern.

Varying greatly in size and form they can be small flat rosettes to taller, delicate one metre-high plants with round, forked, slender or grass-like leaves. Many produce pale flowers, sometimes scented to lure their prey.

When examining a Sundew closely you can see glistening droplets on the ends of their leaves, which look a little like dew. These drops, however, are not water, but sticky mucilage secreted by specialized glands. When an unsuspecting insect lands on a leaf, it becomes ensnared in this sticky trap. The leaf then slowly curls around its prey, allowing the plant to digest the insect and absorb valuable nutrients. Often the area where they occur is deficient in the nutrients which insects provide for the plant.

Sundews are sparkling jewel-like carnivores that grow in our bushlands and remind us how wonderful and intriguing the natural world is.

Linda Fullagar, Photo Daniel Jackson

CORPORATE SPONSORS

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.