



# THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

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## Braeside Park

470 Lower Dandenong Road,  
Braeside 3195  
Melway Map 88 D8  
Phone: 8427 2027

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*The opinions expressed in this newsletter are the authors' and  
do not necessarily reflect those of Parks Victoria or its staff.*

## President's Report

Over Christmas and New Year, I walk daily during the early morning along Braeside Park's Howard Road Trail. The cool morning air is refreshing and many small birds flitter through the trees while large groups of sulphur-crested cockatoos and rainbow lorikeets fly about noisily.

This must make me either a **Passive or Other User** or a **Nature Admirer**. These are categories of people according to Parks Victoria's '**Braeside Precinct's Key Visitors' Grouping**.' [From the people who brought us the Mordialloc Freeway, the State's largest men's shed, and a community garden: this is the Victorian Government's latest scheme for Braeside Park!] Usually, I meet only one or two **Trail Users** (visit the park for a physical experience - i.e. running). Later in the day, I may observe **Urban Socials** (visit for large social gatherings) but who obviously do not favour the Friends' Breakfast Bird Feasts.

However, I did see an **Illiterate Dog Owner** (Following now are my own contributions to Victorian Managerial English!) who ignore all signs regarding no dogs in the Park also an **Urban Litterer** (visits the park for large or small social gatherings leaving rubbish trails from carpark to picnic spot and toilet paper on floors of restrooms). The **Elderly to not-so-Elderly Volunteers** (assist the Rangers opening the Visitors' Centre, propagating plants, organise community events) are some of the most seen. The **Young Families with Prams and Trainer Bikes** (visit to see grazing cattle, play on the Playground and practise biking) were there in droves too, but not at 6 am! The **Young Explorers** (visit in small groups to hair round on bikes) are present but not usually until mid-morning!

Then, there are the **Mature Men's Shedders**, who regularly visit to chat, drink coffee, and eat and to expand their shed. Finally, there are the **Miscreants** who visit for reasons best known to themselves and are seen regularly around the River Red Gum toilet block.

I am sure I left out some other category of people who visit Braeside Park. I am not really into boxing people to *"plan how the park is used and its assets protected, including community and visitor access and facilities and conservation of the park's environmental and cultural values"* – whatever that may mean.

You see, I think that since the Park has had a 54% increase in visitor numbers since 2000 then it must be doing something right. In addition, I believe that maybe this is because there are no dogs, no horses, no camping, and no cafés – unlike everywhere else between Mornington and Port Melbourne. Maybe people want something different – like natural open spaces!

Each day, I stop and chat to other users of the Park. (I should probably start calling it management market research.) An early morning runner has commented on the lack of Rangers and resourcing to attend to the paths and dog walkers, but they love natural setting and the NO DOG Rule! Later, an afternoon wanderer has called me over to listen for an Echidna rustling through the leaves near the Visitors' Centre. His passion is to sit and watch the Parks' fauna. He says he has observed some dubious behaviour from visitors, which he has passed onto Andrew (first name basis with Ranger Andrew) and he noted the vans and cars camping, not allowed, in the parking bays. A couple in the Visitors' Centre commented on the wonderful display. They enjoy walks after learning from the displays.

You see, trying to identify what makes the Park attractive to the community is difficult. It is a bit like school. Every teacher has a goal. However, each student arrives with a different background and they leave the lesson having learnt different things. I feel that the Park's visitors' reasons for visiting vary. I know that I visit for physical exercise, mental well-being and as an ardent naturalist. Sometimes I visit to support the Rangers by opening the Visitors' Centre or to introduce the community to flora and fauna through walks and talks. Other times I take visitors to enjoy the Park and to have a picnic.

## President's Report (cont.)

I know that I love that there are no dogs nor horses in the Park so I could meet a snake or echidna on the track. I know that I, and small children on bikes or in prams, are safe from dog or horse confrontations. If I and other visitors walk to the wetlands we will see birds feeding, nesting and resting free from dogs and horses' molestation.

On Wednesday 8 January 2020, my morning walk was disturbed by the arrival of earth-laden trucks. It is amazing how many things have changed about that project after VicRoads ticked all of the community consultation boxes with something different. The noise and smell of dirt mixed with the smoke of this summer's apocalypse bushfires, and it all brought back the horror of the Mordialloc Freeway. The noise followed me right into the middle of our Park. It is no escape anymore!

*By Judith Sise*

## Park Activities

### Observations

We endured smoke haze and blistering heat followed by red rain, waterfalls and mushrooms!



*Rosemaree MacLean*



## Park Activities (cont.)

### Freckled Ducks

Braeside Park wetland for several months has been home to one of the rarest water birds as its endangered in Victoria.

This bird is dark greyish-brown with a large head that is peaked at the rear, and a distinctive narrow and slightly upturned bill.

The dark brown plumage is evenly freckled all over with white or buff.

It prefers permanent fresh water swamps and creeks with heavy growth of cumbungi (bullrushes), lignum or tea-tree.

During drier times, it moves from ephemeral (not permanent) breeding swamps to more permanent waters such as lakes, reservoirs, farm dams and sewerage ponds and generally rests in dense cover.

These birds feed at dawn and dusk and at night on algae, seeds and vegetative parts of aquatic grasses and sedges and small invertebrates.

Nesting usually occurs between October and December but can take place at other times when conditions are favourable. Nests are usually located at or near water level, and are made from finely woven twigs with a layer of down. Males remain with females during early incubation, but the female does all of the incubation and rearing of the young.



*A pair of Freckled Ducks on the Braeside wetland – by Danny Fog*

*This bird is the *Stictonetta naevosa* or commonly called the Freckled Duck.*

Two members of the Friends group complete monthly surveying of the main wetland at Braeside carrying out a survey of the whole wetland commencing from the Red Gum Picnic Area Car Park. A big thank you to Margaret and Ian Langdon for the survey work you have undertaken over the last several years.

The data collected is provided to Birds Australia to load into their data base which can provide reports about the bird data loaded.

Its worth noting the following data from the wetland survey work over the last 4 months.

Month	Freckled Duck	Total Species
November	8	55
December	8	54
January	19	59
February	15	42

**Des Lucas**

## Park Activities (cont.)

### Bird Data Surveys

Our surveys at Braeside Park in January were the first we had done, in two groups, covering all ten survey sites on the same day. We would like to continue with this routine as we get more data, the sites get covered more frequently and the results are more easily compared when they all occur on the same day in the same weather conditions. That means we are always on the lookout for people to come along and join us - preferably on a regular basis.

The other group doing Woodlands while we did Heathlands, spotted a Cattle Egret in breeding plumage on the same day we saw the Sacred Kingfisher. Both birds are particularly interesting as they are migratory species in Australia; the Sacred Kingfisher spends the winter in northern Australia and comes south in Spring to breed in the south-east of the continent. The Cattle Egret spends the winter in the south-east and then migrates north to the Murray Valley and east coast of NSW/SE Queensland to breed. This year the migratory patterns of these birds have been significantly affected most probably by drought and by bushfires. The numbers of migrants from the north, like Kingfishers and Cuckoos, are well down. Their path south would have been impacted by the bushfires in southern Queensland and NSW in September & October as they made their way south. On the other hand, the Cattle Egret developed his breeding plumage but didn't move north. Possibly, too much drying in the swamps along the Murray and again, bushfires in NSW - but how did s/he know that. The Wonders of Nature are unfathomable to us.



Sacred Kingfisher by Ken Haines

**Pat Bingham**

### Heathlands

The following species were recorded, along with common bird species.

Spotted Pardalotes, Superb Fairy Wrens, Brown Thornbills, Grey Fantail

H1 - Grey Butcherbirds, White plumed Honeyeaters, Spotted Pardalote, Common Bronzewing

H2 - Spotted Pardalotes, White browed Scrubwrens, Brown Thornbills, Sacred Kingfisher

H3 - Striated Pardalote, Superb Fairy Wrens, White plumed Honeyeaters

H4 - Grey Shrike Thrush, Yellow tailed Black Cockatoo

### Woodlands

Twenty eight species were recorded in the general list for the 4 Woodland sites and 1 Heathland site we surveyed last Friday. This number is within the expected range for this sub-survey.

Noisy Miner, Red Wattlebird, Common Myna, Rainbow Lorikeet were seen in all sites. The three Weebills seen in W5 in December, which we expect were refugees from the drought up North, did not show up last Friday. there was quite a lot of activity in W5 which was not the case in early surveys. It will take a few more years of surveys to establish what the trends are for the sites.

A Striated Thornbill, which have been rare at Braeside, was spotted in W2. Striated Pardalote outnumbered Spotted, partly due to a group of five seen in W3, which was unusually quiet. There was suggestive evidence that Rainbow lorikeets were still interested in nesting in H5, but not in the chest high hollow that has been used for the last three seasons. Grey Fantail numbers were down from what they are in most surveys.

**David McCarthy**



## Park Activities (cont.)

### Summer

This summer was memorable for all the wrong reasons. Fires, more fires, floods, dead animals on a previously unimaginable scale and enormous destruction to property.

After a very hot December/January, we were very fortunate to get some excellent rains that not only put out the fires, but also replenished the reservoirs.

This also applied to Braeside Park.

The wetlands are beautiful, the gums recovering from the solar burn and lerps. I have included a photo of a tree in the Redgum carpark that was looking very sorry last year, but now has a radiant new growth.

Following are some pictures that I have taken over the last few weeks that highlight the resilience of nature.

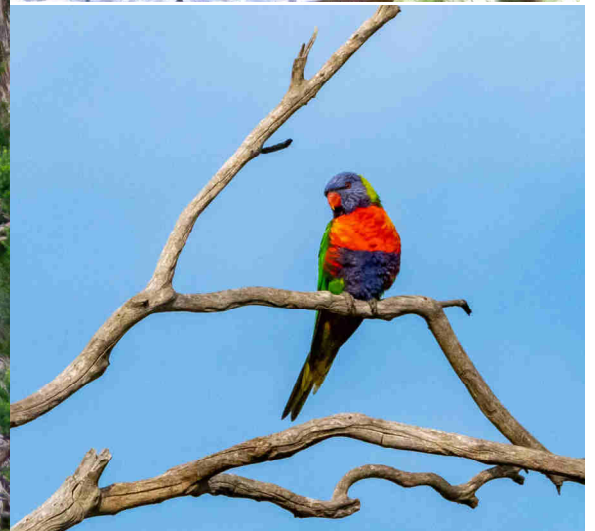
*David MacLean*





## Park Activities (cont.)

### Residents



David MacLean

## Park Activities (cont.)

### The Future

Last year Parks Victoria held a workshop “Braeside Park Precinct Plan”.

Members of Friends of Braeside park, Dingley Village Men’s Shed, Braeside Walkers and Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre were asked for ideas and opinions on various proposals for the park moving forward.

Many ideas were proposed. Some of the more popular ones were:

- \* More facilities – gym equipment, Phar lap track, powered camping area, playground at red gum carpark, extended tracks around wetlands....
- \* More programs - Community education and workshops, nature watch, junior rangers ...
- \* More staff on site, more walks and guide programs, rangers on site all year
- \* Indigenous leaders in Landcare management
- \* More comprehensive signage – including some history
- \* Allow area for dogs
- \* More trees and plant propagation – preserve ancient gums
- \* Maintain current facilities and improve car parks
- \* Continuation and expansion of groups – Men’s shed, nursery, walking ...
- \* Cultural garden beds to share culture

Braeside Park received over 450,000 visitors in 2017 (an increase of 54% since 2000). This is predicted to increase to over 600,000 by 2031. So, it is important at this time to review the use and facilities of this park.

Brittany Goldsmith (Moorabbin Leader) stated – “Braeside Park could become a dog walking destination or music festival mega space” in a recent article.

I am not sure if either is what the current visitors are looking for. Whatever formula Parks Victoria has used in the past which has increased the popularity of this park needs to be acknowledged as “successful”, and I would hope that we will maintain this “Oasis” of nature in the middle of metropolitan Melbourne, not only for the sake of the wildlife that call it home, but also for the education and enjoyment of the half a million predicted visitors this year and all of those who will visit in the future.

**David MacLean**

### BirdLife Australia - Monitoring Program

10 bird monitoring transects are monitored in this program.

This year our aim is to work in two groups so we can cover the ten survey sites on the same day. This way we can get more data, the sites get covered more frequently and the results are more easily compared when they all occur on the same day in the same weather conditions.

That means we are always on the lookout for people to come along and join us - preferably on a regular basis.

The sessions occur on the 4th Friday of each month starting 8:00am. Meet in the Park Office carpark.



## Friends of Braeside Park—Activity Calendar

**Community Nursery is Open on the Third Sunday of the Month  
10:00 am to 12:00 noon – Seedlings \$2.00 each.**

### **The Wednesday Team**

More Volunteers are needed. Please come & join us.

Wednesdays 9 am - 12 noon

Meet at the lunch room - Park Office

Morning tea provided.

*Bev Bancroft*

## Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

<b>President:</b>	Judith Sise
<b>Secretary:</b>	Margaret Hunter
<b>Assistant Secretary:</b>	Rosemaree MacLean
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Helen Russo
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	David MacLean
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Frank Russo
<b>Publicity Officer:</b>	Vacant

<b>Postal Address:</b>	PO Box 608 Braeside, Vic. 3195
<b>Phone:</b>	0417 323 460
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com">braesideparkfriends@gmail.com</a>
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au">www.braesideparkfriends.org.au</a>
<b>ACN:</b>	A 002 4027 B

### **Committee Meeting**

2nd Thursday, monthly 7:00 to 9:00pm at the Visitors Centre.

The Committee meets to make decisions about the running of the group.

Next meeting on Thursday 12th March, 2020.

Join us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240/#>

### **Newsletter Contributions**

Thank you to Judith Sise, Rosemaree MacLean, Frank Russo, Des Lucas, David McCarthy, Pat Bingham, David MacLean & Park Staff for contributions to this edition.

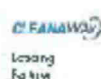
If you have an item to share in future editions or have any feedback  
in relation to the newsletter, please contact the editor at

[braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com)



# STEP TO UP CLEAN — UP —

*Clean Up Australia (@ Braeside Park  
Sunday March 1st 10am till 12pm  
Meet at Visitors Centre  
Wear appropriate clothing and gloves  
Morning Tea at the end of the event*



REGISTER or DONATE

[cleanup.org.au](http://cleanup.org.au)



# The Friends of Braeside Park Activity Calendar for 2020

Activity	Time/Day	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee Meeting	7pm - 9pm 2nd Thursday at the Visitor's Centre	*	13	12	9	14	11	9	13	10	8	12	10
Community Projects Weekday - "The A Team"	9am - 12pm Wednesday's at the Park Office	*	5 12 19 26	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9
Nursery open for plant sales	10am - 12pm 3rd Sunday	*	16	15	19	17	21	19	16	20	18	15	20
Plant Propagation Community Nursery	10am - 12pm 1st Saturday & 3rd Sunday	*	1 16	7 22	4 19	2 17	6 21	4 19	1 16	5 20	3 18	7 22	5 20
Community Waterwatch Program	9:30am - 12pm 2nd Sunday Visitors Centre	*	9	8	12	10	7	12	9	13	11	8	13
Bird Observations	8am - 11am 4th Friday Park Office	24	28	27	24	22	26	24	28	25	23	27	18
Nightwalks	From Visitor's Centre 7pm	Nightwalks offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation per head Bookings Essential 0417323460			17	1	5	3	7	4	Nightwalks offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation per head Bookings Essential 0417323460		
Community Projects Weekends	9am - 12pm, follow the signs	*	*	*	*	*	*	National Tree Planting Day Saturday 25th	World Environment Day Tree Planting Sunday 23rd	*	*	*	*
Special Activities are held throughout the year at various times		*	*	Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 1st Meet at Visitor Centre 10am - 12pm	*	*	Mystery Walk Sunday 21st 12:30 - 3:30 with afternoon tea	*	AGM Sunday 9th 2pm-4pm	Breakfast with birds Sunday 20th Red Gum Picnic Area 7am - 9:30am	Spring Walk - Nursery Open Day Sunday 11th 1pm - 3:30pm	*	End of Year BBQ Wednesday 9th