



# 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

By Judith Sise

### March

This past month has been very challenging for both the volunteers, Rangers and the natural communities in Braeside Park. The repeated high temperatures have been devastating for flora and fauna. There is still some water in the wetlands. A raft of wetlands birds have flown in to take advantage of some deep pools. One morning, I happened on 10 Freckled Ducks on a semi-submerged log with a diving Blue Billed Duck and Hard-head and Shoveler Ducks near-by. A long necked tortoise crawled on to the end of the log. Of course, I had no camera!

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February, I joined the Victorian Field Naturalists' Terrestrial Invertebrates Group, led by Reiner Richer, at the Red Gum Picnic Grounds. Reiner had arrived early to check out the area. He found a flowering wattle with some interesting bees, bee wasps and jumping spiders. Moving towards the Wetlands incredibly slowly, the group of around 14 adults, many carrying cameras with special attachments to photograph small things! I found two moths mating and was intrigued by emerging lerp. A lerp is the white sugary, waxy covering, which the immature stages of some psyllid insects (family Psyllidae) produce from liquid excretions known as honeydew. A Southern Brown Tree Frog was found as well as other insects. A few dragonflies were photographed but not by me! This dedicated group host monthly meetings and field activities. During lunch, Reiner said there are many insects' species are unknown.



This raises the issue of the Mordialloc Freeway, which looms large on the horizon. The Panel to review the Environmental Effects Statement

began on February 25 and the Friends are among those individuals, groups, businesses and councils presenting. It is interesting how on the weekend before the Panel began hearing submissions, a state government pamphlet popped into my letterbox to reassure me that the Freeway was one-step closer. The Residents Against the Freeway held a breakfast in the Waterways' wetlands to re-assure all that they would be fighting to stop the construction of the Freeway.



I attended two talks as part of the Special Interest Groups of the Victorian Field Naturalists, which made me yet again re-think my natural concepts. I have been a gardener for most of my life. However, after a talk by Dr Sapphire McMullan-Fisher on **Mates - Mycorrhizas – the fungi that plants need** my whole concept on gardening has been turned on its head. I always accept that the roots of plants were their anchors and water deliverers. Yes, I had encountered those devious plants such as the wedding bush, which needed some special "mate" to germinate but I did not really understand the inter-connectiveness and reliance of trees on mycorrhiza *within the roots* to deliver water. She used a coloured jigsaw of mapped mycorrhizas to show the many different fungi species a typical tree needs to function. It seems from Northern Hemisphere research (Australian being poorly funded for most research) that trees communicate and defend against attacks through mycorrhizas networks. Who said talk to the trees appears to have been on the right track!

## President's Report (cont.)

By Judith Sise

The second talk by Associate Professor Ian Rutherford on *Fluvial Geomorphology* was equally intriguing. He spoke enthusiastically on the Melbourne creeks and rivers paths. The questions after the talk brought home to me the connection between the two talks. The European methodology of land management has stuffed up the country. However, there are those who are driving changes for improvement with the new research. This brings me back to the Mordialloc Freeway Panel where many "experts" have presented their 'paid' and knowledgeable opinions that the biodiversity will be just fine. The experts suggest that, with the culverts, raised flyovers and swales excreta, birds, bats and mammals will be OK. I not so sure. Maybe the previous development through farming, sewerage and grazing has already irreparably damaged the Park and we are now at the tipping point of no return.

I prefer to hope that the Panel will see that no construction or heavily modified changes are the way forward.

### April

The Friends of Braeside Park turned 30 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April. The Committee is producing a history of the Friends' Group to present at the Annual General Meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> August 2019. Eileen Blake, a Committee Member, has taken on this job and has been working with Des Lucas, Ranger-in-Charge of Braeside Park, searching through the archives. With nearly 100 hours clocked up so far, she is leaving no stone unturned in her research. Eileen's problem will be how to condense all the information into a smallish book!

Des announced that the 10 MILLIONTH visitor to Braeside Park has happened. The Group has an amazing record of approximately 360 000 volunteer hours, worth around \$10 800 000. It is estimated that 750 000 indigenous plants were propagated and planted by the volunteers and community. Add to that the \$450 000 of Grant money received from applications by the Group and resident Ranger (Des for 20 of the 30 years), and you can start to see how important the Friends Group is to the well-being of the Park. So please come along to the Annual General Meeting to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> Year of Volunteering.

Day Light Saving ends and the Friends' Nocturnal Night Prowl's begin. The first night is slightly under-booked which is unusual. It is normal the reverse with Margaret turning away families. There is also a Bat Night planned for April. Frog Surveys also begin in April – even with a lack of rain, some frogs are enjoying the remaining pools.

Our neighbours and close allies, The Dingley Village Men's Shed are seeking a grant to extend their premises to accommodate increasing numbers. What a successful group this is! Their assistance to the Friends Group and Braeside Park is remarkable. Off the top of my head, I can think of construction of tables and seats, new signs, the viewing platform at the wetlands, stable, Visitors' Centre display and new doors and refurbishing the propagation centre and repairing the play-ground equipment. They are maintaining the staining of the Cypress Drive art works and doing the lining of the car parks. And I am sure I have left out many other projects that these wonderful men do for the Park.

With so many volunteers passionate about the Park, you would think that the State Government would see how much the Park is valued and cared for by the local community of South Eastern Melbourne and think twice about the impact a Freeway would have on this Park. Building Infrastructure for our expanding population to drive progress is the State Government's passion. If only some of the money gained from the expanding economy was channelled into maintaining our green areas, the health budget may be lowered and the happiness factor higher. Things like employing more Rangers and replacing antiquated toilet and water infrastructures are so essential to visitors yet there is no money available. Instead, we will have a Freeway right along our boundary and "mitigation" for noise, light and air pollutants and tunnels for the night birds and eels to navigate as they about their secret nocturnal lives.

Two of the Committee are on the Mordialloc Freeway Reference Group to keep the State Government's agency VicRoads aware of our concerns and Committee Members have applied to stay on the Reference Committee if the project goes ahead!

## Editor's Note

In April this year we celebrated Braeside Park opening 30 years ago.

## Park Activities

### April Bat Night

John Harris from Wildlife Experiences, was invited to run a Bat Night on April 13th.



John, (with the help of the guests) put up two specialised bat nets (these do not harm the bats).

John delivered an educational and entertaining presentation on Bats and other local nocturnal creatures at the Visitor's Centre. After this we attended to the nets and found a number of micro bats. These were examined and then released to the great excitement of all present—especially the children.



By David MacLean

## Park Activities (cont.)

### Bunyip Fire 2019

I hope this short article provides you with a little insight into the work undertaken to suppress fires. Staff from Braeside Park were part of the team undertaking the suppression of this fire. Lightning created this beast which so quickly became destructive.

My role located at the Gembrook recreation reserve was to refuel part of the team of helicopters which were used to manage and suppress the fire from the air. This task involves two people refuelling in most cases whilst the engine is operating. The helicopters fly in, land we refuel them and they depart to continue their efforts.

There are various helicopters for this task – which includes the fire birds (red in colour) who manage and determine where the water bombing aircraft drop their precious loads of water. Then there is various size water bombing craft from the Kestrels up to the Erickson sky crane – All the Helicopters fly for a minimum of 2 hours before refuelling but the Erickson can fly for nearly 4 hours before needing to refuel. On the last day of my shift there was two helicopter that flew in from the ACT and NSW adding the fleet at the fire.

There is also a fixed air wing fleet that also operate from Avalon Air Base.

The two air teams together along with the ground based staff and the incident management staff all combine to ensure the fire suppression effort is delivered in an efficient, effective and cohesive manner.

Finally other staff from the Park provided fire front ground support efforts for the fire suppression campaign.



By Des Lucas



### 2019 Night Walk Program

The Friends night walk program will once again be operating in 2019 with expected bookings via 2 methods – text/phone to 0417 323 460 or email to [braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com). The dates are April (to be determined add when available), 3 May, 7 June, 5 July, 2 August, and 6 September. We take a maximum of 15 to 20 people per walk only for safety reasons and to ensure that the animals can be sighted in a quiet and welcoming environment. Sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing are essential, with a gold coin donation to the friends.

By Margaret Hunter

## Residents

### Night Walk



Nocturnal Pictures  
by David Maclean



Turtle Stack by Danny

**ERNIE'S "A" TEAM - WEDNESDAYS:**

Ernie our leader has moved on to another era in his life as he is now on leave until the end of June in 2020—at this point he will retire from Parks Victoria.

Andrew Morrison and Amanda Daw will be the Rangers assisting with the A team from this point forward.

We look forward to seeing lots of new faces as a new leadership teams assist with the many project the friends help to deliver on ground.

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*

*Join in the activities with Parks Victoria Rangers  
every Wednesday from 9 am - 12 noon  
- meet at the Park Office  
- morning tea provided  
Help is needed for a variety of jobs - everyone most welcome.  
Wednesday afternoons continue  
from 1 pm - 2:30 pm in the Nursery & Community Garden.  
Everyone Most Welcome*

**Newsletter Contributions**

Thank you to Judith Sise, Margaret Hunter, Bev Bancroft, Frank Russo, Merv Dannefaerd, 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)



Friends of  
Braeside Park

**The Friends of Braeside Park invite you to attend a night walk to view nocturnal animals of the park**

**On Friday Nights at 7pm  
from April thru to September  
on the 12<sup>th</sup> April, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> June,  
5<sup>th</sup> July, 2<sup>nd</sup> August & 6<sup>th</sup> September  
Meet at Visitors Centre  
Braeside Park, Lower Dandenong Rd, Braeside**

**Cost: Gold Coin Donation per person  
Numbers Limited - Bookings Essential  
Via email:  
[braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com)  
or contact Margaret Hunter on  
0417323460**

## Friends of Braeside Park—Activity Calendar

### Weekday Community Project-The A Team:

Every Wednesday with Ranger staff commencing at 9:00 - 12:00 from the Park Office. Activities can include weeding, mowing weeds, mulching, planting, fencing etc.

### Nursery - Plant Propagation:

1st Saturday and 3rd Sunday from 10:00 am to 12:00 Noon and  
Every Wednesday 1pm to 3pm  
Undertaking a variety of propagation activities.

### Committee Meeting:

2nd Thursday, monthly 7:00 to 9:00pm at the Park Office.  
The Committee meets to make decisions about the running of the group.

### Water Quality Monitoring:

3rd Tuesday, monthly 9:00 to 12:00 noon from the Park Office.  
Water samples are taken and monitored from the Dingley Waterway and Wetland.

### Bird Observations:

A set bird observation is completed monthly around the main wetland.  
Call Ranger Des Lucas on (03) 8427 2027 to become part of this program.

### Birds Australia Monitoring Program:

10 bird monitoring transects are monitored in this program with 5 completed one month and the other 5 the next month.  
The sessions occur on the 4th Friday of each month from 8:00 am alternating between the following starting locations.  
Park Office January, March, May, July, September, November  
Robin Car Park February, April, June, August, October, December

### Special Activities:

Night walks are offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation.  
For details and bookings phone 0417 323 460

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

### Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

**President:** Judith Sise **Secretary:** Margaret Hunter  
**Assistant Secretary:** Rosemaree MacLean **Treasurer:** Bev Bancroft  
**Newsletter Editor:** David MacLean **Webmaster:** Frank Russo  
**Publicity Officer:** Vacant

**Postal Address:** PO Box 608 Braeside, Vic. 3195 **Phone:** 0417 323 460

**Email:** braesideparkfriends@gmail.com

**Web:** [www.braesideparkfriends.org.au](http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au)

**ACN:** A 002 4027 B

Join us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240/#>

Current Facebook Members = 118

Friends of Braeside Park Activity Calendar 2019

Activity	Time/Day	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee Meeting	7pm - 9pm 2nd Thursday at the Park Office	*	14	14	11	9	13	11	8	12	10	7	12
Community Projects Weekday - "The A Team"	9am - 12pm Wednesdays at the Park Office	*	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11
Nursery open for plant sales	10am - 12pm 3rd Sunday	20	17	17	14	19	16	14	18	15	20	17	15
Plant Propagation Community Nursery	10am - 12pm 1st Saturday & 3rd Sunday	5 20	2 17	2 17	6 21	4 19	1 16	6 21	3 18	7 22	5 20	2 17	7 22
Saturday Waterwatch Program	9:30am - 12pm 2nd Saturday Visitors Centre	*	9	9	13	11	8	13	10	14	12	9	14
Bird Observations	8am - 11am 4th Friday Park Office	25	*	22	*	24	*	26	*	27	*	25	*
Bird Observations	8am - 11am 4th Friday Robin Car Park	*	22	*	26	*	21	*	23	*	25	*	13
Nighthawks	From Visitor's Centre 7pm	Nighthawks offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation per head Bookings Essential 0417323460											
Community Projects Weekends	9am - 12pm, follow the signs	*	*	*	*	*	World Environment Day Tree Planting Sunday 2nd	National Tree Planting Day Saturday 27th	*	*	*	*	*
Special Activities are held throughout the year at various times		*	*	Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 3rd Meet at Visitor Centre 10am - 12pm	*	*	Mystery Walk Sunday 23rd 12:30 - 3:30 with afternoon tea	*	AGM Sunday 11th 12pm-1pm	Breakfast with birds Sunday Red Gum Picnic Area 7am - 9:30am	Spring Walk - Nursery Open Day Sunday 13th 1pm - 3:30pm	*	End of Year BBQ Wednesday 11th

Website [www.braesideparkfriends.org.au](http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au)

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

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Date Printed 28/01/2019

