



FoCC Incorporated March 2020 News Update

Issue Number 64

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1. FoCC's future activities in light of Covid 19 Virus

Dear members and friends,

At the March FoCC committee meeting the FoCC calendar of events for 2020 was changed to take into account the Covid 19 pandemic.

The April meeting and May heritage mine walk have been cancelled. The June bird forum has been tentatively rescheduled for August pending on speaker availability. The tree planting scheduled for late July hopefully may be possible and the FoCC committee is continuing to organise for that event.

It is possible that cancelled events may be rescheduled for later in the year.

FoCC's News Updates, advocacy and Koala counting should continue as normal.

Our membership is above 50 and growing. Our friends network stands at 622 and 452 followers on facebook. A safe place to self-isolate and get your exercise is in the wonderful hills and valleys of Woowookarung Regional Park.

Bob Hartmann President

2. Koala Report given to council

FoCC President Bob Hartmann presented the Koala Working party report" to the City of Ballarat in question time on Wednesday March 11th. The report outlined the reports processes, citizen science observations and a map of the 49 Koala sightings. The sightings suggest about a dozen Koalas in the Corridor.

Bob asked the Councillors 'Which Councillor was prepared to put up their hand and chair the Koala Implementation Committee as part of the Koala Plan of Implementation'? Councillors strongly supported the request with Cr Hudson and Cr Coates expressing strong interest with further support from Cr's Rinaldi, Harris and Taylor. FoCC is looking forward to working with Council to improve the wellbeing of Koalas and Koala habitat in Ballarat.

3. Koala Press

The Ballarat Courier ran two Koala stories during March. One featured a Koala in Buninyong on March 5th



HEARING UP: A local marsupial chose an unusual vantage point in Buninyong, where it stayed for around an hour and a half. *Picture: Janine Gifford.*

Koala makes itself at home

THERE was an unexpected pest hanging around outside Janine Gifford's Buninyong home last week.

Returning from a Monday morning walk, Ms Gifford said she noticed movement behind her.

"I had just walked in with our Labrador when I saw the koala had literally followed me up the driveway. I wouldn't believe it."

The koala then climbed up one of the posts on the verandah of her Simpson Street home, a short distance from Buninyong Primary School.

"It was a noisy time of the day with children arriving at school," Ms Gifford said. "The most surprising thing was he didn't seem at all perturbed by me and the dog."

Ms Gifford said she found it particularly surprising as they have no native trees in the garden.

After about 90 minutes, the koala climbed down from his man-made perch then climbed a eucalyptus tree in a neighbouring property.

"I don't know why he was moving - there was a bit of noise in the street during the night a few days earlier and he might have been trying to find a new patch," she said.

She said she was concerned about the koala's wellbeing - especially with busy roads nearby - and called the vet and Ballarat Wildlife Park, who came out to check on the marsupial.

They told her the koala was safe and was finding its way,

advising her that it should be left alone. The koala stayed in the tree until it moved on the next night or early the following morning.

Ms Gifford said she was relatively recent arrival to the address but neighbours said they had not sighted a koala around there for a number of years. Many observers believe the local koala population in Buninyong an Ballarat has declined steeply in recent years.

The image was submitted to the Friends of Canada Corridor community group which has been collecting information on reported koala sightings in the area to track and assess population level more accurately.

— JOLYON ATTWOOD

The second article March 9th 2020

Push for more koala help

IT WAS a grim reminder of the challenges for our local wildlife population. A koala and her joey were killed last week at the Naylor Rd and Midlands Highway junction, a symbol of the strain the local population is under.

For Jeffrey Roosen, the secretary of the Friends of Canadian Corridor (FoCC) community group, the only positive thing to be drawn from the discovery was the resilience of at least the animals still exist in the area.

But the remaining population is already under intense strain, and such deaths will only make it more acute.

Calls to protect our best known marsupial have been growing louder recently, thanks in part to some of the work being carried by community groups such as FoCC.

Their work has suggested a worrying decline in a once abundant local koala population.

Since August 2018, the Friends of Canadian Corridor have taken part in citizen science, recording koala sightings in a bid to calculate their numbers with more accuracy than before.

The 47 recorded sightings to end of January of individual koalas - stretching from Yarrowee River Valley to Buninyong Township - may translate to as few as a dozen in the wildlife corridor they have studied.

Now the group wants to push conservation efforts further - especially in the wake of a terrible summer for Australian wildlife - and have formed a koala working party to take the issue forward.

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Despite the stark population figures suggested by the citizen science, Mr Roosen believes there are reasons to be positive - but only if action is taken now.

"If our koalas are healthy, our environment will be healthy," he said. The Courier's "Koalas are the icon of our natural environment in Ballarat. After the bushfire season we have still got our koalas, we've got to make sure we keep them."

He mentions the Living Corridors initiative, which is being developed by the City of Ballarat at the moment, which seeks to preserve vegetation and wildlife channels to safeguard the area's flora and fauna as the city's outer fringes expand.

They also want to breathe new life into the City of Ballarat's koala plan of management. Much heralded when it arrived in 2006, it fell out of fashion for several reasons, including perceived changes in council and the overbearing imperative of the later bushfire management plans.

One strand of that plan that was not put into place was a full, academic study of koala numbers. The group is hoping to work with the Australian Koala Foundation, the council and a University of Melbourne student to monitor koalas in Unsookarung and the Union Jack Reserve and adjacent watercourses. Most koala sightings in the local area - with the notable exception of Mount Buninyong - are found near rivers and creeks.

Mr Roosen also hopes VicRoads will be open to taking measures that could reduce koala deaths for the forthcoming Midlands Highway upgrade around Mount Buninyong.

The recent road deaths also reinforces another idea of the working group - to put together a koala and wildlife response guide to help residents know what to do if they find animals in trouble.

It will come too late for that unfortunate mother and joey. But - along with a concerted response from community groups, council advocacy and government - it could help save others to come.

It was the Friends of Canadian Corridor and Woowookarung Area who were the first to call for a koala study in the area at www.focc.com.au

And to keep in the act, Channel Nine news featured Koalas on the evening news of Monday March 9th.



The news article is available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/9NewsWesternVictoria/videos/204505043947209/>

4. Dementia Sensory trail

The cultural heritage assessment of the Dementia Sensory trail and Pick My Project trail was completed recently. The process involved a thorough examination of the land and sample excavations along the trail. In mid-March the entrance sign was placed on the trail just off Ellsworth St East and several trees were removed as preparation for the vehicle parking bay.



The new explanatory sign board



Trimmed tree



The cleared car park area

5. Interesting Park sightings

Spotted just south of Clayton St in the old top block plantation was Spikey. Interesting to see what is coming back into the old plantation areas.



Things that hoot in the night at the edge of the park at Mt Clear ! A Tawny Frogmouth according to FoCC's bird folk!

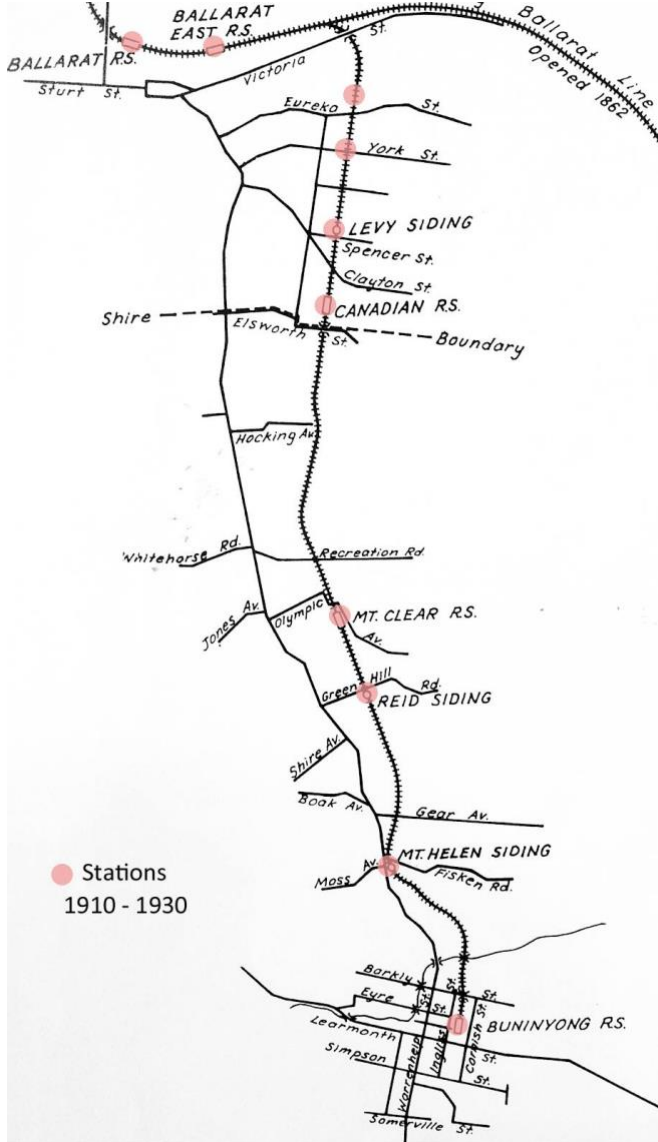


Image: Courtesy of Rex

6. Catching the Bunny

Catching the Bunny was the way local people along the old Ballarat to Buninyong railway line affectionately called riding the train into town.

The bunny ran from 1891 to 1947 before being closed beyond Eureka. The FoCC is scoping out a walking/cycle trail that celebrates the Bunny rail and trail.

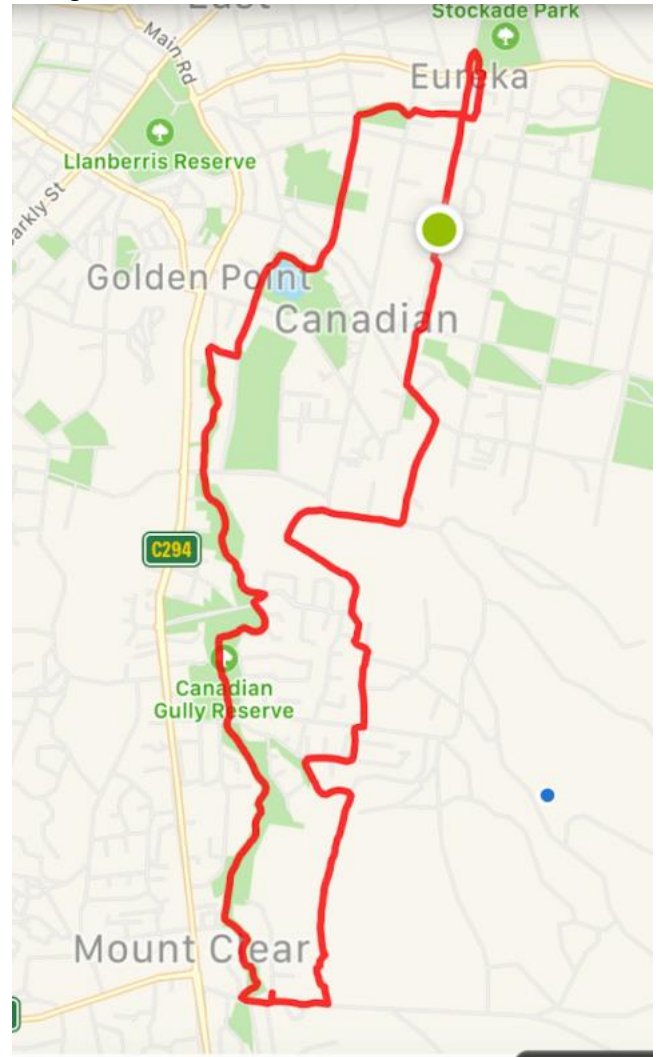


The amount of stations fluctuated from 6 in 1890 to 10 during 1910 to 1930 and 5 in 1947.

The trail starts at the MADE complex at Eureka and follows as close as possible the railway down to Recreation Road. The trail passes by many old Bunny Rail features including the bridge over Grasstree Creek, railway cuttings and embankments along the way. Some of the rail remnants are on private property and can only be viewed at a distance. At Canadian Station one of the World War 2 inland fuel storage tank is in place. Old gold mining relics including the Mt Clear Horse Puddler and the Cyanide vats are along the trail.

At present the trail is not complete as the trail stops near 55 Recreation Road. Once the management of 55 Recreation Road is settled with the Victoria Schools Building Authority the trail will be able to be completed. The return leg of the trail is via the Canadian Creek trail and

Warrenheip Gully trail. When the Covid 19 emergency is over, FoCC will host a "Catching the Bunny" by bike or foot outing.



7. Koala Sightings

If you see a Koala please record time, tree species and age, place and hopefully an image. Send to focinfo@gmail.com or FoCC facebook.

A Koala was sighted just east of Pax Hill on March 18th and the observer was phoneless hence no image. Thanks to Gail and son.

This small Koala was spotted near the rim of the crater on Mt Buninyong on March 4th.



Image: Courtesy of Cheryl
 Another Koala was spotted in Blackberry Lane on Mt Buninyong On March 27th.



Image: Courtesy of Sue

A quite brown coloured Koala in the same tree as the Tawny Frogmouth on page 2.



Image: Courtesy of Rex

8. Interesting property for sale

The old chook farm in Haymes Road Mount Clear is up for virtual auction on May 2nd
 This very interesting property borders the Park and contains remnants of the old Bunny rail corridor plus a significant amount of Koala Habitat featuring many large old trees.

The site is zoned NRZ with Environmental Significance 05 and Bushfire Management Overlays. This block is a gem of a site for anyone wishing to own a nature treasure trove close to town and the Park.



9. Elizabeth St Buninyong - PLP 2019 811

A subdivision has been proposed in Elizabeth St Buninyong near the entrance to Park.
 The subdivision is in Koala Habitat and it is planned to remove a large amount of Koala Habitat. If you are resident in this area and concerned about losing the forested northern part of Buninyong then you should object!



The application fails to address the requirements of the Ballarat Planning Scheme Koala and Koala Habitat clause 22.04 – 3 in particular dot point 2 of the **buildings and work requirements**:

"In the case of a plan of subdivision, it has been designed so as to retain and enhance Koala habitat on the site and is consistent with the objectives of this policy; and"
 The proposed removal of native vegetation contravenes this requirement. There is no evidence of any "retain and enhance" of Koala habitat in this application.

The site could comply by having only two extra dwellings as four can only be fitted in by removing Koala habitat.
 Web address for seeking further information on PLP2019 811 application.

<https://eservices.ballarat.vic.gov.au/ePathway/Production/Web/GeneralEnquiry/EnquiryLists.aspx?js=136483027>

10. An example of good planning decisions

Noted recently on a visit to Canadian Springs Drive in Canadian is an example of good neighbourhood planning by a developer and the City.

This is a great example of how the COB, the local community and an enlightened developer created a road around a tree. This was done in 2001 and stands as an example of good planning.

A neighbour described the tree as “whenever I look out my window, I am reassured that all is well by the sight of that tree”



11. Park works

Parks Victoria contractors have been about - busy mowing firebreaks along the old Bunny rail line in Mt Clear as well as roadsides such as Dozed Road and others.

A new culvert near the corner of Bakers Rd and Katy Ryans Road was also replaced to stop winter flooding.

FoCC facebook

Rob at webmaster@focc.asn.au is now overseeing the FoCC Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/

Currently we have just over 444 457 friends following us on facebook and growing. Feel free to add and pass on to other friends and press the like button.

2020 draft calendar

April 5 th	Catching the Bunny: A walk along the Bunny trail. Cancelled
Apr 15 th	General meeting “Park Geology” Cancelled
May 26 th	Mining Heritage Walk Cancelled
June 17 th	Forum: Birds with “Sean Dooley” Postponed
Aug 2 nd or 9 th	Tree planting “Old motor cycle track” Under review
Aug 19 th	General meeting
Oct 21 st	Annual meeting “Guest Speaker”
Nov 2 nd	Wildflower walk
Dec 4 th	Christmas at the Lookout

The FoCC update is published on behalf of the Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated, Registered No A0097535B. Circulation this issue is ~~612~~ 626

The update is generally published monthly. Friends wishing to add articles to the FoCC update may do so by emailing focinfo@gmail.com

Feel free to circulate widely including doctor’s waiting rooms, work offices, friends and neighbours. We are proud to walk this land with the Wadawurrung people and all other First Nations people. Any opinions expressed in the publication are those of the editor and do not officially represent Parks Victoria or the FoCC.

Web - www.focc.asn.au **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/>

Unsubscribe by emailing the editor focinfo@gmail.com

Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated



Registered number A0097535

Membership Application 2020

Individual membership of the FoCC runs from January 1st to December 31st each year at a cost of \$20 per year Community groups may be represented by individual members.

First Name:	
Last Name:	
Name of Group represented: (if applicable)	
Address first line:	
Address second line:	
Town/City:	
State:	Post Code:
Home Phone:	
Mobile phone:	
Email address:	
I agree to the rules of association and abide by the FoCC committee of Management decisions	
Applicants signature:	
Date:	
Applications may be sent by email to focinfo@gmail.com or by mail to the Treasurer (address below)	

Payment may be made by

1. Bank transfer to details: **BSB** 06 3502 **Account No** 10955630. Note: Please add your name to the bank transfer and email focinfo@gmail.com a copy of this application form or your name and the date of the transaction.
2. Payment to the Treasurer at a FoCC meeting
3. Cheques to made out to "FoCC Incorporated" and addressed to:

FoCC Treasurer
PO Box 83,
Mt Clear Vic,
3350.

Date Received:

\$

Receipt No