



FoCC Incorporated Spikey News



Linking the community with Woookarung and the Canadian Corridor
April 2022 Issue Number 87

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1. FoCC General Meeting



The City of Ballarat's new Coordinator Sustainable Environment officer Fiona Stevenson, was guest presenter at the well-attended FoCC general meeting on Zoom on Wednesday April 13th 2022.

Fiona outlined the City's sustainable goals for the near future such as:

- Fitting existing council buildings with solar panels
- Working towards a Zero Emissions goal for the City's operations
- Working with 22 other councils to develop new development and building standards for inclusion in the Ballarat Planning Scheme. This would require developers to design and build to sustainable principles and rules.

- Implement a regular State of the Environment Report for Ballarat. The last report was in 2018 and a new report format should provide indicators on the state of the environmental health of Ballarat.
- Facilitating environmental education in Ballarat in new ways by facilitating programs such as the "Natures Stewards" environmental awareness program
- Transitioning the city's vehicle fleet to EV's and continuing with the water saving integrated water management systems
- Working with the community on Climate adaption plans, Biodiversity protection and enhancement, friends and community group support and the City's Carbon neutrality plans.

FoCC president Bob Hartmann thanked Fiona for her presentation and passion for the job.

He said "the FoCC is looking forward to working with Fiona and her council team on the myriad of opportunities within the Corridor."

2. **Bird of the Month VIII**

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo

(Calyptorhynchus funereus)

With its dinosaur-like call, and elegant, leisurely flight, the Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo is truly mesmerising. Large (55-65cm), charismatic, and intelligent, the Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo is a nomad of eucalypt forest / woodlands, shelterbelts, and pine plantations.

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos are granivores (i.e. seed-eaters), commonly associated with feeding on exotic pine cones. Their traditional native food sources include the seeds of sheoaks, hakea, banksia, and grass-trees.

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo have extinction risk classifications of 'Secure' (Victoria) and 'Least Concern' (global), and a 'Stable' population trend – though, recent research suggests declines. The main threats are bushfires, and deforestation of food trees and hollow-bearing large, old eucalypts which it relies on for breeding success.

Suitable hollows are high up, deep, wide (40cm in diameter), and lined with woodchips and decaying debris. Breeding season is Oct—May, and the female incubates a clutch of 1-2 eggs, while the male feeds her. After hatching, both parents share feeding duties. Usually only one hatchling survives. Young are dependent on parental care up to the age of 6 months.

Distinguishing between the sexes, there are a few subtle differences to tell males and females apart. Eye rings: males have a pink eye ring, whereas females have an inconspicuous, grey eye ring. Bills: the male's bill is dark grey, whereas the female's bill is ivory-coloured. Cheek patches: the females' yellow cheek patch is larger than those of males. Juveniles look similar to the adult female, but are browner.



Adult female (Image credit: Rob Loveband).

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos occur in pairs, family trios, and – in autumn-winter – flocks of one-hundred. The flight is “buoyant”, with “slow, deep wingbeats”. Flighted flocks are very vociferous, and their vocalisations are described as “weird, far-carrying squealing”, with “conversational chuckling and ‘giggling’”.

Next time you wander through Woookarung Regional Park, or other local forest patch bordered by pine plantations, keep an ear out for the dinosaur-like call of the Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo – and if you do see one, take a moment to admire its effortlessly elegant flight!

Author note: A FoCC Committee member and co-admin of FoCC's Facebook and webpage, Joel Ellis is the resident bird nerd, amateur Powerful Owl researcher, and editor of FoCC's (co-funded) 'Indigenous [Species] of Southern Ballarat' trilogy of brochures. Joel has studied birds up to Honours degree level, interns as an ecological consultant (ornithologist), and is a member of BirdLife Australia (Ballarat branch).

3. Water Race walk Sunday May 22nd

The Heritage Water Race Walk begins at the Sparrow Ground rotunda 10am on Sunday May 22nd. The walk is through the Sparrow Ground, Pax Hill and Sawpit Gully sluice fields. Much of the water race infrastructure is still evident, untouched since the goldrush. The walk is 5.5 km in distance and has several sections of rough and off-track sections. Solid footwear and reasonable fitness required.

A reminder will be sent out one week before the event.

More information focinfo@gmail.com



Map of the water race walk

4. Ballarat Mechanics Institute Twilight Talks

The Ballarat Mechanics Institute has been hosting a series of talks on the *Yarrowee River, Uncovering the secrets of the Ballarat River*.

On Wednesday April 27th the FoCC presented a Short Story of the Forest outlining the establishment of the Woookarung Regional Park and restoration of the Canadian Corridor.

On Wednesday May 4th the twilight talk will feature Dr Susan Lawrence author of the book “Sludge” will be talking about the sludgy mining history of the Yarrowee River.

A Sludgy History of Yarrowee Creek

Ballarat's mining heyday was not kind to Yarrowee Creek. Between 1851 and 1914 the Yarrowee was dug over, redirected, channelised and dredged. It became the receptacle for tonnes of liquid mining waste and was a conduit for diverting that waste to communities downstream. Susan will talk about how mining changed the Yarrowee and what was done to try to stop it.

And

Prof. Peter Dahlhaus

The importance of groundwater systems of Ballarat. Groundwater is often the subject of myths and mysticism. Although it is an unseen resource, groundwater has been critical to the cultural, social, environmental and economic prosperity of Ballarat. Groundwater supplies our rivers and wetlands, mineral springs, agricultural irrigation and urban water supplies. This talk outlines the groundwater systems of the Ballarat district and the holistic values these groundwater systems bring to our communities

More information and booking at:

<https://ballaratmi.org.au/event/2022-twilight-talks-season-1-session-4/>

5. Burnt Car

The risk of fire is always a threat to the Park. This burnt car managed to set a part of the forest alight. We are indebted to the fire fighters for their quick actions.



Burnt car residue. North gate off Clayton St. Image April 7th 2022

6. Sawpit Gully uncovered

A recent discovery of the Sawpit Gully story by Colin has greatly added to the local knowledge about the gold sluicing in Sawpit Gully.

The following notes were distilled from the Ballarat Star - Wednesday 22nd June 1870

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/219309551>

The article provides an insight into Sawpit Gully and Penny Weight Gully sluicing and sinking operations.

“The Sawpit Gully Company has a block of 17 acres there, where the sinking is about 9ft”.

and

“Close by is the Association Company’s ground where the gutter has been struck. This company has a whim and has been washing with good results”.

and

“The ground has been rushed, greatly to the delight of everybody but the gallant Rangers, whose rifle practice ground is being made a mess with the sludge from the puddling machines.”

The covering of the rifle practice ground with sludge is consistent with mining in Saw Pit Gully as is the comment of finding the main gutter. There is a mined gutter adjacent to Sawpit Gully on the north side of the old Commonwealth Rifle Range. The Rangers Rifle Range at that time however began at Joseph St and ran through only to Richards St. The current range site is much further east. (See article below)

7. How many rifle ranges have there been?

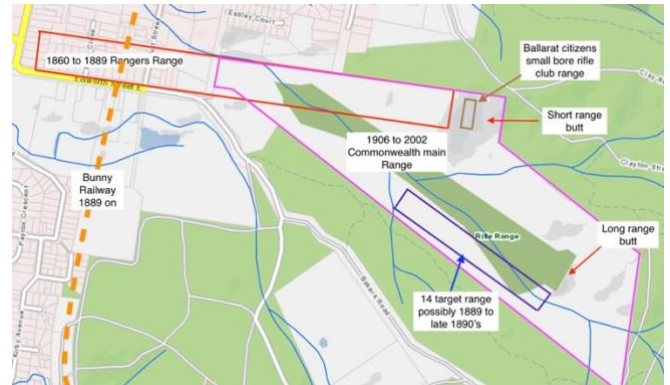
The Sawpit Gully article above mentions the “Ranger’s Rifle Range” which brings forth how many rifle ranges has there been?

1861: The first rangers rifle range (red outline) opened. It ran from Joseph St through to Richards St. The construction of the Bunny Railway closed that range in 1889.

1888: A new, perhaps temporary 14 target range (blue outline) was built without butts.

1906: The new Commonwealth Rifle Range (purple outline) was constructed and remained in operation until 2002.

1960’s A short small bore undercover range (brown outline) was built across the Commonwealth short range.



Map of the four ranges in the Lal Lal Drain area. In addition to the four ranges in the Lal Lal Drain area there was also the Cremorne Rifle Range between York St and Wilson St which operated between 1904 and 1930’s. Plus a “Sparrow Shooting Range” at Sparrow Ground during the early 1930’s.

8. Koala sightings

Koalas have been quiet and difficult to find since the end of the mating season in February.



Wattle tree Drive Mt Helen April 5th. Image courtesy of BJ. And Koala scat was found in Sawpit Gully on April 8th 2022. See image on page 7 Another Koala was spotted near Cobden St and Barkly St in Mt Pleasant on April 20th 2022. No image.



A dozing Koala on top of Mt Buninyong on Anzac Day April 25th 2022

9. Koala Tunnel

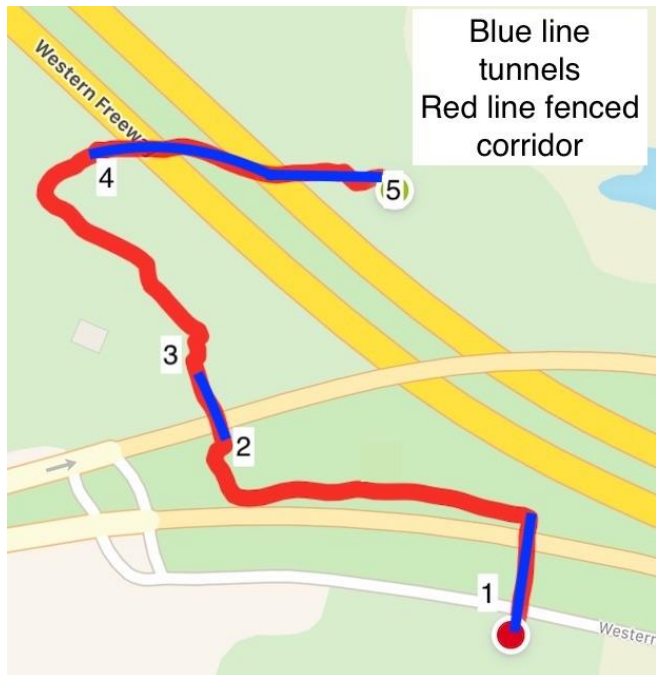
One of Ballarat’s great urban myths is the existence of Koala tunnels under the Western Highway and the Ballarat turnoff at Woodmans Hill.

It is not a myth; it was actually built as part of the Western Highway Bypass around 1993.

In 1991 the Ballarat University College “Prevett” Report to the City of Ballarat said:

“Currently arrangements are being made with VicRoads for the safe passage of koalas under the Western Highway and Ballarat Bypass using culverts. Koalas will be prevented from accessing the road by special electric fences designed by the author in consultation with the Department of Conservation and Environment.”

The “koala passage” is 510m long with 180m of it in tunnels as shown below.



1) The southern entrance of the 50 m long tunnel under the Service Rd and westbound Ballarat turn off dual lane. Image 25 July 2021



2) 50m Koala tunnel under Eastbound dual lane Ballarat turn off Rd. Image 25 July 2021



3) The Koala passage link on the westside of the Eastbound Lanes of the dual lane Ballarat highway turn off. Image 25 July 2021



5) Outlet on the North side of the Western Highway with missing fence panels. April 29th 2022



4) South entrance to 100m long tunnel under the Western Highway. April 29th 2022.

The CoB Koala Plan of Management 2006 accorded it the following comments.

“Evidence from the Ballarat Bypass (Western Freeway) project shows that underpasses are completely ineffective in providing a viable means for koalas to cross roads. There is no evidence that the underpasses provided at Woodmans Hill have ever been used by koalas. A study by the University of Ballarat has shown that only one fox used the concrete pipe tunnel under the Bypass during the study. “

Ref: Page 54 Part 2 CoB COMPREHENSIVE KOALA PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

The FoCC welcomes any information on this topic.

10. **Memory Walk Jog**

The Dementia Australia Walk Jog fundraiser was held at Lake Wendouree on April 3 2022.

Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance, Parks Victoria and the FoCC shared a display tent on site.



Walk Jog display tent 3rd April 2022

11. International Dark Sky Week and Woowookarung Regional Park

The Ballarat Observatory held a well-attended “International Dark Sky Week and Woowookarung Regional Park” at the Lookout on Friday evening 22nd April 2022. The evening focussed on how wildlife utilises the critical time of dusk as the changeover from diurnal to nocturnal species occurs. Judith and Joel spoke about dusk being a very busy time of the day/night cycle for all life. The effect of Ballarat’s urban light spill has effects on wildlife and is very evident from the lookout



The Ballarat Observatory telescope in the twilight time at the Lookout. Friday 22nd April 2022.

Afterwards, when the dark had settled participants were taken through the stars and highlights of the southern night sky and then viewing the same through the two observatory telescopes.

A great night out ably assisted by the presenters and the telescope operators from the observatory.

12. Development proposal at Haymes Rd Mt Clear

A proposal to develop the property at 43 Haymes Rd was advertised in early March. The development proposed the destruction of 2.7 hectares of Koala habitat. The property contains a significant amount of mapped Koala habitat which has been ignored in the proposal put forward.

There has been no further news about this development.

13. Park works

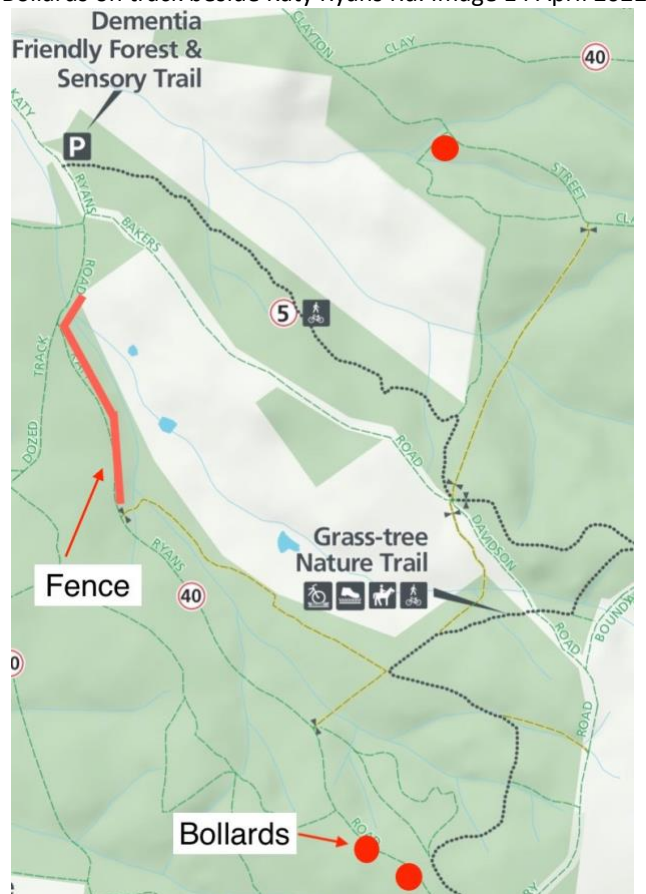
A new fence has been installed along the north side of Katy Ryans Rd. The new fence will remove vehicle access to the adjacent sluice gullies and a notorious rubbish dumping spot. Also installed were several bollards on a side track further east on Katy Ryans Rd.



Installed gate on Katy Ryans Rd. Image April 7th 2022



Bollards on track beside Katy Ryans Rd. Image 14 April 2022



Map showing new fence and bollards location

14. Grasstree Nature Trail turns 1 year old

The Grasstree Nature Trail which was opened in 2021 by Michaela Settle MP turned one year old on Tuesday April 21st. Since opening 9276 visitors have walked, cycled or rode the trail.



Fresh Koala scat on the same stone wall. Note 20 cent coin for sizing.



Image Koala scat 8th April 2022

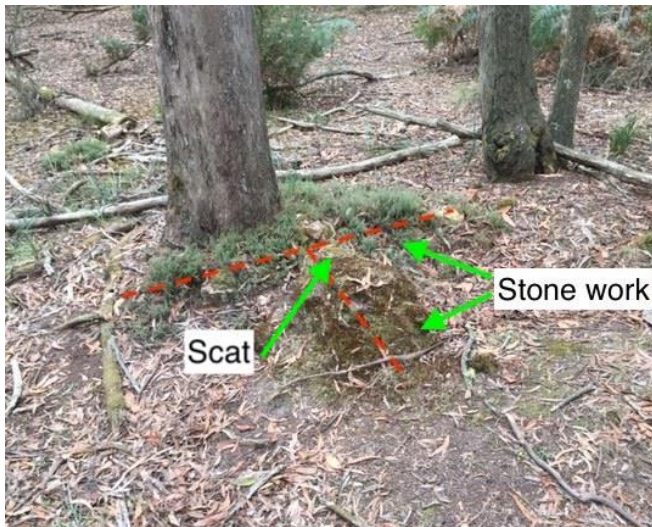
And nearby are the remains of another classic car. Most of it is hidden in the grass with only some parts showing.



Classic car number 11, Sawpit Gully 8th April 2022

15. Remains of a hut found

The Park has few remnants of any buildings within it. There is the 1860's quarry master's cottage outside the Park on Bell Avenue and Quigley's Hut inside the Park on Sinclair's Hill. Recently an old fireplace and part of a wall foundation was found in Sawpit Gully just a few metres from the northern boundary of the former Commonwealth Rifle Range. A good part of this story is that it was several Koala scats sitting on the fireplace that led to the discovery. The remnants now form a second remnant hut in the Park.



Stone work of fireplace and wall. April 8th 2020

16. Butterfly



Common Jezebel spotted at Mt Clear on Friday April 22 2022. Image courtesy of Rex.

17. Bird Forum date change

The FoCC is hosting a "Birds" Forum on **Wednesday 17th August 2022** featuring the guest speaker.

Mr Sean Dooley

National Public Affairs Manager for BirdLife Australia,
author of The Big Twitch, and former holder of
the Australian Big Year twitching record.

More details soon

18. Rubbish dumpers, thieves and vandals

The FoCC encourages Park friends to report track vandals, rubbish dumpers, wood thieves and other suspicious activity to Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or email: woovookarung@parks.vic.gov.au

In emergency situations please call 000
If an offender is spotted, please note vehicle registration details as vehicle identification is most helpful, plus location and details.

19. Useful information

- **Parks Victoria Woovookarung email address:**
woovookarung@parks.vic.gov.au

- **City of Ballarat wildlife information:**

<https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/me/pets-and-animals/wildlife>

- **DELWP wildlife issues reporting information**

Report wildlife crime to Crime Stoppers Victoria on **1800 333 000**.

Report any wildlife at immediate risk of deliberate harm or neglect to **136 186**. Other matters relating to wildlife and wildlife management should use the **136 186** too.

The Help for Injured Wildlife tool will help you locate and contact the closest relevant wildlife carers and rescue and rehabilitation organisations to help the injured wildlife. The main point to reiterate is for any matters related to wildlife crime, to call Crime Stoppers.

20. Membership

Membership runs from 1st January to 31st December each year, Membership fee is \$20 per year. Membership forms are available online or email or on the last page of Spikey News. Note change of Bank details for 2022.

Over 85 wonderful members have renewed.
New members are most welcome.

21. FoCC facebook and webpage

Joel at is now overseeing the FoCC Facebook page.
www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/

Rob is overseeing the webpage webmaster@focc.asn.au

The FoCC has ~~900~~ 913 friends following us on facebook and growing. Welcome to all new friends. Feel free to pass on to other friends and press the like button.

22. 2022 Proposed Calendar

The calendar was prepared by the FoCC committee. After many cancellations over the past two years it is hoped, Covid permitting, the activities will proceed.

May 4 th	Sludge and Ground Water. At Ballarat Mechanics Institute. See article above.
May 22 nd	Heritage Week Water Race walk. Start at Sparrow Ground.
June 15 th	General Meeting – Guest speaker TBA
July tbc	Planting area preparation
August 7 th	500 Tree planting – Cnr of Dozed Rd and Katy Ryans Rd
August 17 th	Birds Forum with "Birdman" Sean Dooley at the Eureka Centre
August 27 th	Tree identification slow walk.
October 17 th to 23 rd	Great Australian Backyard Bird count
October 23 rd to 30 th	7th Annual Wildflower walk
November 16 th	FoCC Annual meeting
December 2 nd	Drinks at the Lookout

The FoCC Spikey News is published on behalf of the Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated, Registered No A0097535B.

The purpose of "Spikey News" is to link the community to Woovookarung Regional Park and the Canadian Corridor.

The FoCC is a registered Landcare Group with Landcare Victoria Inc and a member of the Leigh Catchment Group. Circulation this issue is to ~~945~~ 958 subscribers. Welcome to all new friends.

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 publications are those of the editors 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 2022

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: Bendigo Bank: Friends of Canadian Corridor Inc. BSB 633-000 Account No 184147098. 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