



# FoCC Incorporated Spikey News



Linking the community with Woowookarung and the Canadian Corridor  
May 2022 Issue Number 88

## Spikey News features

1. FoCC receives Community Bank Buninyong cheque for “Bunny Trail” link
2. Heritage Water Race walk Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup>
3. Bird of the Month
4. Koala sightings
5. New toilets at Sparrow Ground
6. Rifle Range up for sale again
7. Park Works – trail upgrade
8. Birds Forum date change
9. Rubbish dumpers, thieves and vandals
10. Useful information
11. Membership
12. Facebook and Web
13. Proposed calendar

### 1. FoCC receives Community Bank Buninyong grant for “Bunny Trail” link

The FoCC has gained a Community Investment grant from the Community Bank of Buninyong.



Andrea Mason, Director of the Community Bank, Buninyong and Peter Darveniza, FoCC treasurer. Image courtesy CoB.



Cr Ben Taylor, Siobhan Rogan, Tarn Kruger, Andrea Mason, Tracie Currie and Peter Darveniza. Image courtesy CoB.

On Thursday May 12<sup>th</sup> 2022, on site at 55 Recreation Road Mt Clear, the Community Bank Buninyong’s Director Andrea Mason presented a cheque for \$33019 to the Friends of Canadian Corridor (FoCC) to build the Mt Clear “Bunny Rail Trail”.

Following the banks presentation, Cr Ben Taylor spoke about how surprised he was when on his first visit to the land that “such a site still existed in Ballarat”. He said the City of Ballarat fully supported the trail by successfully purchasing the land at 55 Recreation Road to become a Bushland Reserve with the “Bunny Rail Trail” across it.



Cr Taylor outlining the Councils support for the trail. Image courtesy CoB.

Parks Victoria’s Area Ranger Siobhan Rogan highlighted the “Bunny Rail Trails” connection to the Woowookarung Regional Park with a soon to be constructed 10000 step trail, the Dementia Trail and the Grasstree Nature Trail.



Siobhan Rogan addressing the crowd. Image courtesy CoB.

The opportunity to connect Mt Clear to Woowookarung Regional Park came about in 2019 when a FoCC member



spotted a newly erected auction sign on the land by its then owner, the Victorian School Building Authority.

Buninyong MP Michaela Settle successfully convinced the Victorian School Building Authority to pause the auction to allow the FoCC to develop a public use proposal for the land.

The Friends went to work with the local community, the City of Ballarat and the Community Bank Buninyong to develop a solid proposal to build a new Rail Trail along the old rail embankment on the property.



Happy attendees on the trail. Image courtesy CoB.

The proposed rail trail will connect Mt Clear township with the Woowookarung Regional Park and will provide a trail through the Woowookarung Regional Park north to the Eureka Centre and the existing “Bunny Trail” connection into central Ballarat.

The Friends worked closely with City of Ballarat to bring the land into community ownership with the City of Ballarat finally becoming the owner of the land in November 2021.

The FoCC approached the Community Bank Buninyong, as it is owned by the community and its community development fund supports community projects such as the Rail Trail the Friends were proposing.

The Friends are ecstatic at the Community Bank Buninyong funding of the Rail Trail project.

The FoCC in collaboration with local community groups are now ready to construct the new ‘Bunny Rail trail’ along the old Ballarat to Buninyong railway embankment with work expected to start in July.



## 2. Heritage Water Race walk Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup>

On Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022 the FoCC held a Heritage Water Race and Sluice Field discovery walk in the Woowookarung Regional Park.

Fifty friends experienced the walk through the old alluvial gold mining parts of Sparrow Ground, Pax Hill and Sawpit Gully areas.

There are three water race collection systems in the Park, designed to collect water for sluicing the clay and silt from alluvial gold deposits. There are 30 kilometres of water races, 5 dams and 7 alluvial sluice fields in Woowookarung Regional Park.

The sluice fields are largely intact and very close to the City and Sovereign Hill and as yet have unrecognised heritage value.

The Friends are looking forward to having a proper heritage study of the water races and sluice fields so as to have a better idea of the extent of the gold mining era heritage works that are so close to the city.



The crowd waiting for the start to the water race walk at the Sparrow Ground rotunda. May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022.

### The 5.5 km walk route map

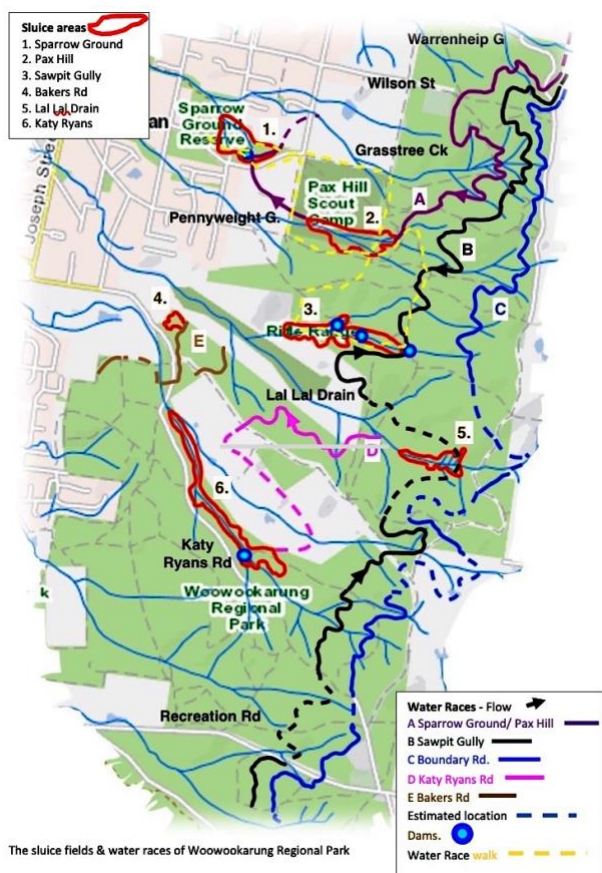


The Water Race and Sluice Field walk map. Arrows show the direction of the walk and the purple dots are water races. May 2022

The FoCC plans to host the walk again next year. In the meantime the FoCC will be pursuing the discovery of who

actually built and owned the water races as part of learning more about the history of the alluvial mining in the Park area.

### Woowookarung water races and sluice fields master map



The FoCC Woowookarung Regional Park, Water Race and Sluice Field map. May 2022

### 3. Bird of the Month IX (May 2022)

#### Eastern Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*)

Looking to level up from birds widespread and obvious? Want to find a bird that won't find you first? A bird of such size that is cute and challenging to find, but not so tiny that it strains the eye? Shier than the usual suspects, but not too shy? Perhaps a splash of colour to distinguish it from other birds, whilst brightening your day? Enter the Eastern Yellow Robin — the perfect bird for you! This unmistakable yellow and silver robin is thrilling for first-timers and the well-versed, alike!

With a beautiful yellow breast that stands out like a beacon, amidst — often — the dappled light of the shadowy Blackwood-lined gullies that it prefers, brings a dash of flamboyance to the bush. Its active foraging, which involves nonchalantly perching sideways on tree trunks and pouncing exuberantly to the ground, is enough to mesmerise any onlooker. Insects and spiders are the usual prey items, and these are typically pounced on from a low perch.

Inhabitants of dry woodlands through to rainforests, and parks, gardens and golf courses, Eastern Yellow Robins are

often a bankable, year-round presence in suitable habitats where they are known to occur.

Eastern Yellow Robins may occur in singles, pairs, and family groups. Rare among Australian robins, the Eastern Yellow Robin is 'sexually monomorphic' (as opposed to sexual dimorphism), which means that males and females have identical plumages, with the only (barely discernible) difference being that the males are slightly larger (16cm) than females (15cm).



Pair of adults (Image credit: Rob Loveband).

Breeding season begins in June and runs through to December. The female builds the nest; a woven cup of fine bark and debris, bound together with spiderwebs. She also incubates the clutch of 2-3 eggs. Both parents are responsible for raising young, with 'helpers' (matured offspring) sometimes providing assistance to the latest brood.

Next time you wander through Woowookarung Regional Park, or other local forest patch, keep an eye out for the Eastern Yellow Robin — and if/when you do find one, take a moment to admire how colourful and engaging they are, and savour the symbol of your level-up in the birding experience!

*Author note: 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).*

### 4. Koala sightings

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





Eddy Avenue Mt Helen. Image courtesy Dianne 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**Why is it important to keep reporting Koalas.**

Recently the FoCC lodged an objection to a developer wishing to cut down Koala habitat trees. The application claimed that only 15 koalas had been recorded within 5 kms of Canadian between 1970 and 2015.

Our objection focussed on the fact that over 200 koalas have been observed in that area over the last three years by local residents. And all observations are now being recorded by the FoCC in the Victorian Bio Atlas which is the reference most used by authorities.

**5. New Toilet at Sparrow Ground**

The City of Ballarat have been upgrading facilities at Sparrow Ground. Recently a new toilet block was constructed and opened.



The new toilet block at Sparrow Ground Spencer St Canadian. May 2022

**6. Rifle Range up for sale again**

The old Commonwealth Rifle Range is up for sale again. The new agents, Colliers Ballarat are selling the property under instructions from the Mortgagee:

“MANDA CAPITAL HOLDINGS PTY LTD (ACN 168 795 088) ATF THE RIFLE RANGE DEVELOPMENT UNIT TRUST”

Expressions of interest to purchase the property close on June 17<sup>th</sup>.

The sale is being promoted as “Ballarat’s Golden Nugget” with an interesting twist for nowhere in the promotional material is the “Rifle Range” mentioned.



Colliers, under instructions from the Mortgagee is delighted to offer for sale a development opportunity, “Ballarat’s Golden Nugget”, located at 209a and 211–213 Elsworth Street, Canadian, Ballarat.

209a Elsworth Street, Canadian (Lot 1), a 5,133 sqm\* allotment zoned Industrial 1, is being offered with a permit in place for the development of 14 warehouses and use and development of a takeaway food and drink premises.

211–213 Elsworth Street, Canadian (Lot 2), a 386,400 sqm\* allotment is currently a Rural Conservation Zone, with potential future rezoning.

This unique opportunity is strategically situated 1km\* from Sovereign Hill, 1.2km\* from the Midland Highway and 3km\* to the centre of Ballarat.

The two title allotments totalling over 39 hectares\* are being offered together or separately.

For sale via Expressions of Interest closing Friday 17 June at 2pm (AEST).

Information memorandum “Ballarat’s Golden Nugget” brochure page 2. Courtesy Colliers Ballarat

**The Rifle Range consists of two lots:**

The rifle range is made up of two existing lots. A small 5000 square metre industrial “Lot 1” is west of Kline St and the larger 38 hectare eastern “Lot 2” is east of Kline St. The eastern Lot 2 is zoned Rural Conservation Zone and cannot be subdivided under a minimum of 40 hectares, unless the Council and the State Government approve the process. This is a long-winded process and such a proposal was put before the Victorian Govt Planning Panel in 2016 and failed to be accepted.

The Rifle Range even has its own Ballarat Planning Scheme clause:

05/09/2013 VC103  
 SCHEDULE 1 TO THE RURAL CONSERVATION ZONE  
 Shown on the planning scheme map as RCZ1  
 BALLARAT RIFLE RANGE

The clause is explained as:

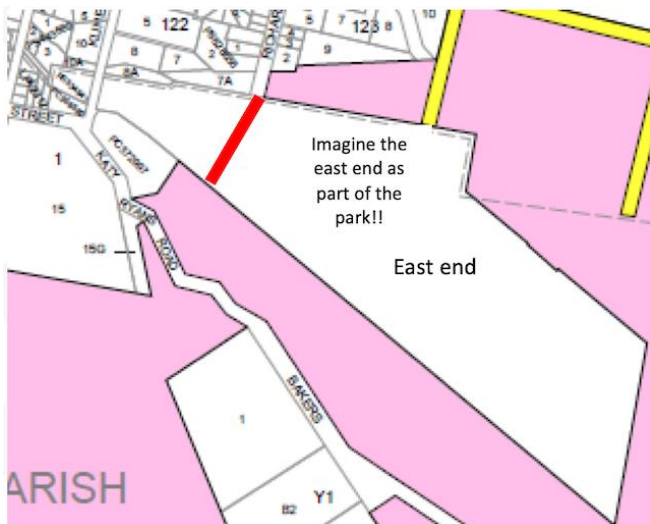
“The former Ballarat Rifle Range is a potentially contaminated site with four habitat zones of medium, high and very high conservation status. Any development on the site needs to be cognisant of the presence of any contamination. Any decontamination of the site needs to manage the impact on the habitat values and the water quality in the streams dissecting the site.”

Ref Ballarat Planning Scheme VC103

In 2019 a plan to split the large eastern end (Lot2) of the Rifle Range into two lots was discussed between the previous owner, DELWP, Parks Victoria and the City of Ballarat.

The plan considered creating one lot between Richards St and Kline St at the western end maybe for housing. The other lot east of Richards St may have then been passed onto DELWP and the Park.

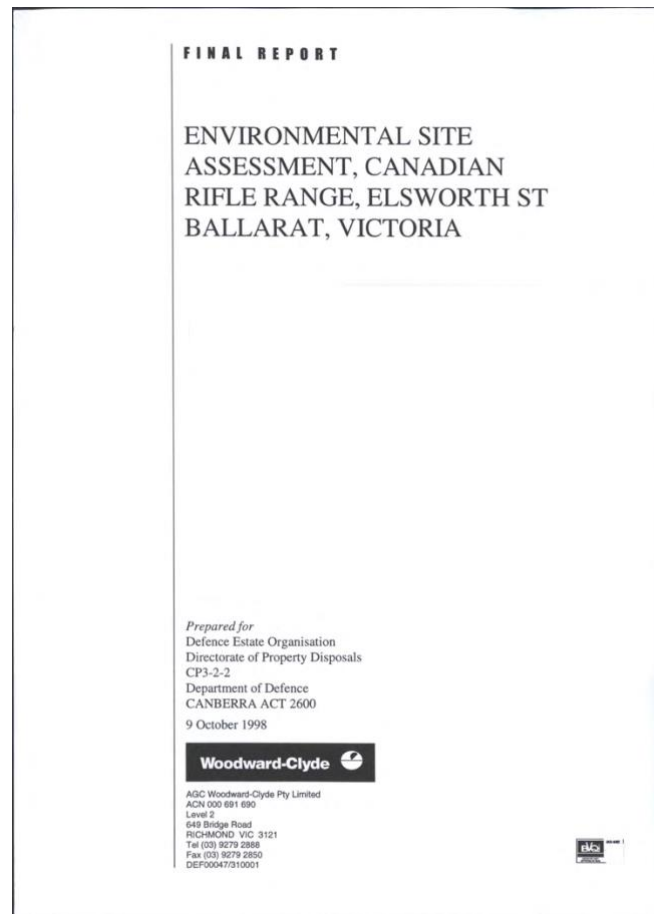
This proposal required significant agreement between the parties and did not happen.



How the FoCC saw the plan for the Rifle Range with the red line showing the possible split point. Map FoCC May 2019.

The Rifle Range’s eastern end contains a number of interesting features:

- Alluvial gold mining relics and water races
- Heritage Boer War era rifle range buildings, abutments and infrastructure.
- Trenches used for World War 1 training and for hand grenade testing. The hand grenades were manufactured by Ronaldson Tippett in Ballarat.
- Significant ES05 Koala habitat and other biodiversity within it.
- The Lal Lal Drain passes through the rifle range and is in poor condition due to the large amount of sludge deposited as a result of the 1870’s era Saw Pit Gully gold field sluicing.
- A large used truck and car tire dump plus old building material dumps.
- Large parts of the central firing range cleared area are gorse affected and may pose a significant fire risk. Recently some gorse removal to mitigate the fire risk occurred.
- Significant lead contamination according to the Defence Estate Organisation Final Report 1998. The report recommends against using the land for “grazing” due to the contamination. And note the “decontamination” suggested in the Ballarat Planning Scheme clause (Page4).



Cover of Defence Estate Organisation, Final Report “Environmental Site Assessment” 1998

## 7. Park works

Parks Victoria contractors have refurbished the existing track between the eastern end of the Dementia Trail and the South Gate and the trail to the Lookout.

This short section was a missing link in the trail and will now provide better access for through walkers and cyclists.



Refurbishment Works underway on the trail. Image May 5<sup>th</sup> 2022. Image courtesy of Bill.





Map showing refurbished trail May 2022

## 8. Bird Forum date change

The FoCC is hosting a “Birds” Forum on **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 9. 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](mailto: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.

## 10. Useful information

- **Parks Victoria Woovookarung email address:**

[woovookarung@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto: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.

## 11. Membership

Membership runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December each year, Membership fee is \$20 per year.

Membership forms are available online or email [focinfo@gmail.com](mailto:focinfo@gmail.com)

## 12. FoCC facebook and webpage

Joel at is now overseeing the FoCC Facebook page.

[www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/)

Rob is overseeing the webpage [webmaster@focc.asn.au](mailto:webmaster@focc.asn.au)

The FoCC has ~~916~~ 931 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.

## 13. 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.

July 24 <sup>th</sup>	Tree planting area preparation
August 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>500 Tree planting</b> – Cnr of Dozed Rd and Katy Ryans Rd
August 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Birds Forum</b> with “Birdman” Sean Dooley at the Eureka Centre
August 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Tree identification</b> slow walk.
October 17 <sup>th</sup> to 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Great Australian Backyard Bird count</b>
October 23 <sup>rd</sup> to 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Annual Wildflower walk</b>
November 16 <sup>th</sup>	FoCC Annual meeting
December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	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 ~~954~~ 959 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](mailto: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](http://www.focc.asn.au) **Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/>

Unsubscribe by emailing the editor [focinfo@gmail.com](mailto:focinfo@gmail.com)