



FoCC Incorporated Spikey News



Linking the community with Woookarung and the Canadian Corridor
August 2023 Issue Number 102

Spikey News features

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1. 2023 Seventh annual tree planting

"Many hands make light work" helped plant 500 trees in the Dozed Rd area of Woookarung Regional Park on Sunday August 6th 2023. Fifty volunteers planted the trees in the two-hour session.

Messmate and Peppermint gums were planted on the dryer ridges whilst Yarra and Swamp Gums with some shrubs were planted in the wetter areas.

A smattering of Manna Gums for Koalas was added to provide future Koala habitat.

The FoCC has planted over 3800 trees over the seven years in the Dozed Rd and Katy Ryans Rd corridor. All the trees have been planted in the old plantation area.

Congratulations to all volunteers especially 3 yr old Jude ably assisted by his Nanna.

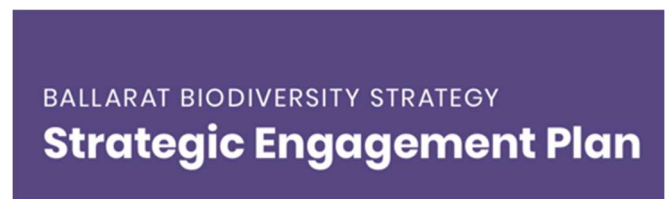
The trees are supplied by the wonderful people at the City of Ballarat Community Nursery. The trees are propagated using locally sourced seed.

A sausage sizzle sponsored by the Community Bank Buninyong (Bendigo Bank) rounded out the mornings work.



All around for a sausage and a cuppa. Thanks Bendigo Bank.

2. FoCC 30^h August 2023 General Meeting



The forthcoming Ballarat Biodiversity Strategy will be the focus of the FoCC 30th August General Meeting at Earth Ed Science centre Olympic Avenue, Mt Clear.

The guest speaker will be **Mr Heath Steward, Senior Sustainable Policy and ESD Officer at the City of Ballarat.** Heath will outline the process and progress being made in developing the policy.

One focus of the council plan is:

How do we improve the health of natural environment!

The meeting will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the forthcoming strategy and formulate solutions.



Image: Courtesy of Ballarat Courier 9th August 2023

The FoCC general meeting will be held at:
7pm Wednesday 30th August 2023
Earth Ed Science Centre
Olympic Avenue
Mt Clear
Light refreshments served

3. **Koala Forum: National icon – local treasure.**

Koala Forum: National icon– local treasure

Eureka Centre
Stawell St Eureka

5.30 – 8 pm Thursday 14th September 2023.

Key speakers at the forum are:

- Mr Les Stokes – Acting director Infrastructure and Environment, City of Ballarat.
- Dr Desley Whisson - Senior Lecturer in Wildlife and Conservation Biology, Deakin University
- Dr Cathy Robinson – Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO Land and Water
- Mr Jackson Cass - Landcare Coordinator, Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group
- Current Ballarat Koala researchers from the University of Melbourne and Federation University.

The event will begin at 5.30pm with a **light supper break** at 6.30pm and conclude by 8pm.

The forum will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the exchange of Koala murals between the City of Ballarat and its sister city in Japan, the Town of Inagawa and the development and incorporation of the Koala Plan of Management into the Ballarat Planning Scheme in 2010. The Forum focus is on current local Koala monitoring and Koala initiatives including:

- The University of Melbourne and Australian Koala Foundation Koala scat research by Louise Jory,
- The CSIRO National Koala Monitoring Program across Australia including the Ballarat and Moorabool Local Government Areas.
- The current Federation University Koala DNA sampling program plus the FoCC citizen science Koala spotting program

Outcomes expected: The forum will stimulate discussion and initiatives for improving Koala well-being and wildlife habitat enhancement for inclusion into the forthcoming Ballarat Biodiversity Strategy.

Tickets: \$15 at:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1101743>

The Forum is proudly sponsored by:



4. **FoCC Tree ID slow walk**

A lovely day for a tree walk in the Forest.

John Gregurke from the Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat explaining the special details of a Swamp Gum, one of the eleven different species of Eucalypts in Woowookarung Regional Park today. The walk was organised by the Friends of Canadian Corridor in conjunction with Fields Naturalists Club Ballarat.



Viewing a swamp gum. Sunday 27th August 2023

5. **Bird of the Month XXIII (August 2023)**

Pied Currawong (*Strepera graculina*)

Pied Currawongs have appeal for all ages. Marketed to millennials, its utterances of its name ("currawong-currawong!"), and worthiness of (photographic) capture make it Pokémon-like! For middle-aged people, it is aesthetically the intermediate between ravens and magpies with the redeeming qualities of both but without either's notoriety. And for those ageing like fine wine, during your youth, its stocks were centred of *The Man from Snowy River*-esque habitat but today those stocks have risen to where it has today become widespread.

Pied Currawong bear resemblance to ravens and magpies. Currawongs belong to the *Artamidae* Family, which comprises Australian Magpie, butcherbirds, and woodswallows. Pied Currawong (42-50cm) is the same size or slightly smaller than the Little Raven, and larger than the Australian Magpie. In cases where its white is obscured, Pied Currawongs' lack of beard, yellow eyes, and slow, deep

wingbeats distinguishes it from Little Ravens. More challenging is distinguishing between Pied Currawongs and fellow local, Grey Currawongs. The two species are the same size, and exhibit some overlap in plumage. This is particularly true of female Pied Currawongs, which are greyer than males, and therefore look similar to Grey Currawong. The difference is Pied Currawong have a white crescent on the base of the tail, and its bill is (slightly) hooked.



Left: Adult female Pied Currawong (notice the white atop the tail base to differentiate it from its very similar-looking congener, the Grey Currawong). Right: Adult Grey Currawong. Image credit: Rob Loveband.

Pied Currawongs nowadays inhabit many habitats, including rainforests, woodlands, scrubs, farmlands, parks, and gardens. Pied Currawongs may occur in singles, pairs, and gregarious flocks in autumn/winter. Such flocks are quite vociferous in ‘rough weather’, but their ‘wailing, raucous, descending’, ‘slow, rollicking series of mellow, often gurgling sounds’ and ‘long wolf-whistle [of] “weeeooo”’ are more ambience than annoyance. The species is sedentary (non-migratory), abundant, and nomadic, with breeding largely occurring in forests and foothills, with autumn/winter flocks dispersing to coastal lowlands and inland plains.

Breeding season is August–January. The nest is a bulky yet shallow, untidy bowl of sticks, with an egg cavity lined with finer grass, rootlets and bark. The nest is built into a slender fork of the upper/outer leafy canopy, at heights of 5-25m. The female builds the nest, and incubates a clutch of 2-4 eggs – all the while the male feeds her. Once hatched, 21 days are laying, both parents share feeding duties of the young, and will continue to do so for several months after fledging.

Pied Currawongs are omnivores with a diet of insects, small reptiles, small birds, and berries. The characteristic foraging behaviour is to scour the bark for invertebrates. Foraging amongst foliage and on ground are also regular foraging behaviours.

Next time you wander through Woookarung Regional Park, or another local forest patch, don’t forget to look and listen out for the Pokémon-like bird which utters

“currawong-currawong”; the bird from humble origins that has since emerged as habitat- and geography-diverse!

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’ brochure series. Joel has studied birds up to Honours degree level, interns as an ecological consultant (ornithologist), and is a member of BirdLife Australia (Ballarat branch).

6. Koala sightings

Quite a few Koala sightings this month. Some in happy surrounds where Koalas should be. Others in places that are not Koala safe.

This Koala was out of its habitat in Creek View Close, Mt Clear. A short time later she was involved in an incident, perhaps by a car, and was rescued. After a few days of care by the wonderful wildlife rescuers and carers she was released back into Woookarung Regional Park in a safer place.



Creek View Close Koala 31st July 2023. Image courtesy of Paul.



Koala in Nashs Rd area Buninyong 4th August courtesy of Clare



Union Jack Koala 23rd August 2023. Image courtesy of Carol.

October to March is Koala breeding season and peak sightings season, so sightings tend to be less now. They are still there, just harder to spot.

If you see, hear or find scat from a Koala, please send the information containing the when, where, and how to: focinfo@gmail.com.

7. Nest Box monitoring

Nest boxes in Woowookarung Regional Park were checked for usage on Thursday 3rd August by nest box monitors. Eco Warriors Australia, along with Ecology & Restoration Australia are currently monitoring and assessing nest boxes that have not been recently monitored on Parks Victoria land across the state.



Monitors at work 3rd August 2023.

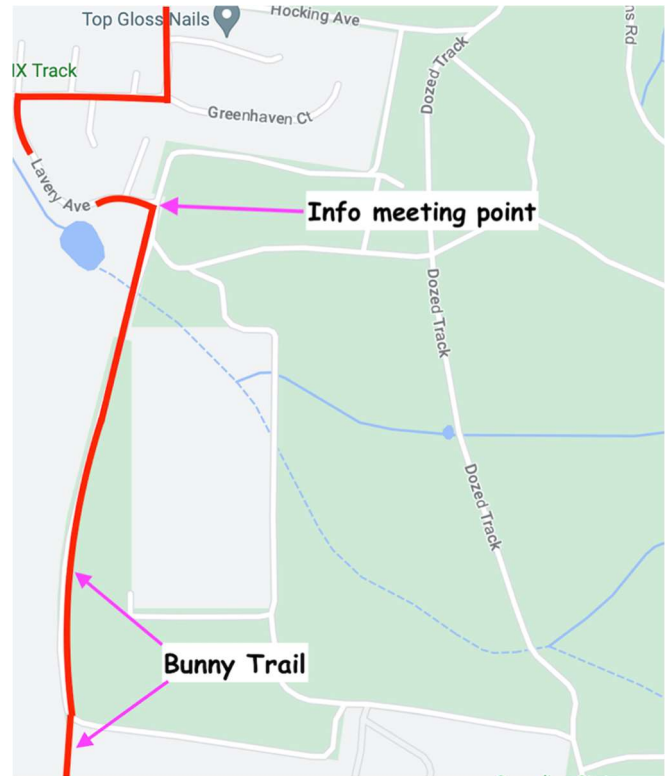
There are a dozen nest boxes in Woowookarung Regional Park and they have been there for quite a while. The monitors brought their pole camera and viewing equipment to look inside the nest boxes.

Of the dozen nest boxes inspected, some were in poor repair with leaky or ill-fitting lids and blocked or difficult animal access. None had been used.

8. Park works

Information session.

Parks Victoria are holding a listening post at Lavery Avenue Park entrance between 4.30pm and 6 pm on Thursday 21st September 2023. The discussion will focus on managing access to the Park, between Horwood (Hocking) Avenue and Recreation Rd. The area is of great interest to the FoCC as the Bunny Trail route is along the western edge of the Park.



Map of area under consideration.



Parks Vic Information session notice. August 2022

Tree planting

Federation University students, Parks Victoria rangers and FoCC volunteers planted around 250 native grasses, shrubs and trees along Penny Leaf track just off Dozed Rd in Woowookarung Regional Park on Thursday 17th August 2023. The planting area was along a former badly eroded 4WD track. The track had been repaired in May by contractors and just needed the helping hand of revegetation by volunteers. The track is along a ridge line and is an important track for fire control in the event of a bushfire.



Federation University students at work on Penny Leaf track 17th August 2023.

And over on Red Hill on Boundary Rd near Wilson St, Federation University students planted more trees and shrubs to undo previous vehicle track damage.



Tracks under restoration at Red Hill. Image 17th August 2023.

9. City of Ballarat repairs on Boundary Road

The City of Ballarat has been busy repairing the deep ruts on Boundary Rd on the south side of the Lookout.



CoB roller on the job, southern side of the Lookout. 2nd August 2023

Vegetation on each side of Boundary Rd between the Lookout and the Fools Lane intersection has been removed for safety reasons and to allow grader access for the roads repair. The road had become very overgrown, making it dangerous for walkers and cyclists coupled with potholes and washaways. The repairs are most welcome.



A welcome sign on Boundary Rd. Image 11th August 2023

10. Bunny Trail

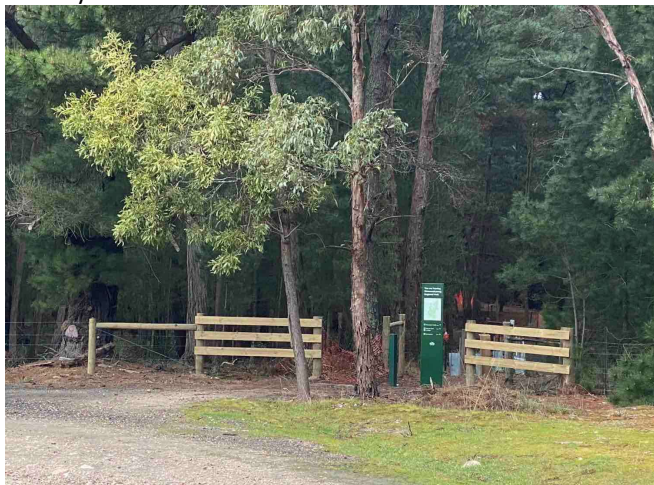
Someone has been busy! The Bunny Trail on Recreation Rd is now sporting a new front fence. Not sure why the central bollard is painted white, but I guess someone had a leftover tin at home. Still a few bits 'n pieces left to cleanup - the orange bunting fences etc., but looking pretty good compared to a year ago!



Bunny Trail entrance and sign. Image courtesy of Rob, 10th August 2023

Park entrance installed on Bunny Trail

Parks Victoria contractors completed the installation of the northern end Bunny Trail entrance and signs recently. This is another step in making the Parks entrances visitor friendly.



Park entrance and sign. Image courtesy of Rob, 10th August 2023

11. FoCC is a Rail Trails Australia Member

The FoCC is now a member of Rail Trails Australia. The building of the 'Bunny Trail' at Recreation Rd Mt Clear has featured in the Rail Trails magazine and their website.



Currently Rail Trails list the short Eureka Section of the Bunny Trail and the Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trails as local trails. In time, the extended "Bunny trail" will be recognised in the Rail Trails listings.

12. 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.

13. 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>

- DEECA 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, call Crime Stoppers.

14. FoCC Membership

Membership runs from 1st January to 31st December each year, Membership fee is \$20 per year. Children of members are free. New members after July are credited to the next year. Membership forms are [available online](#) or email focinfo@gmail.com

15. FoCC Facebook and webpage

www.facebook.com/friendsofcanadiancorridor/

Rob is overseeing the webpage webmaster@focc.asn.au The FoCC has well over 1000 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.

16. 2023 Calendar of events

September 14 th	Koala Forum at the Eureka Centre.
September 21 st	Parks Victoria Information session, Lavery Avenue entrance 4.30pm to 6pm
October (early)	FoCC Sunday afternoon visit to Clarksdale Bird Sanctuary
October 16 - 22 nd	Great Australian Backyard Bird Count
October 29 – Nov 5	8th Annual Wildflower Walk. Starting at the Dementia trail.
November 15 th	7th Annual Meeting
December 1 st	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 Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group. Circulation this issue is to ~~1110~~ 1114 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 made in by the editors in good faith and do not officially represent Parks Victoria or the FoCC.

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