



FoCC Incorporated Spikey News



Linking the community with Woookarung and the Canadian Corridor
September 2023 Issue Number 103

Spikey News features

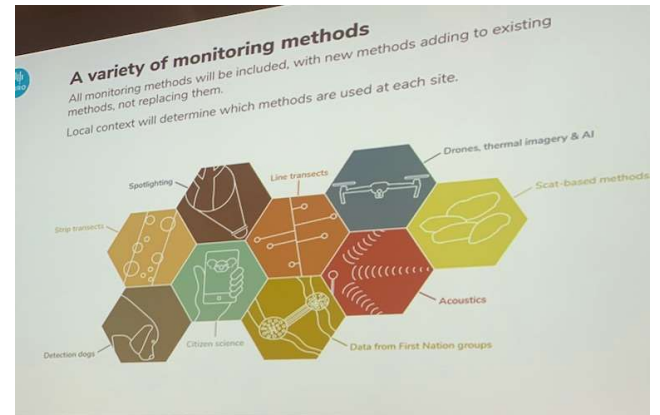
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1. Koala Forum: National Icon – Local Treasure.

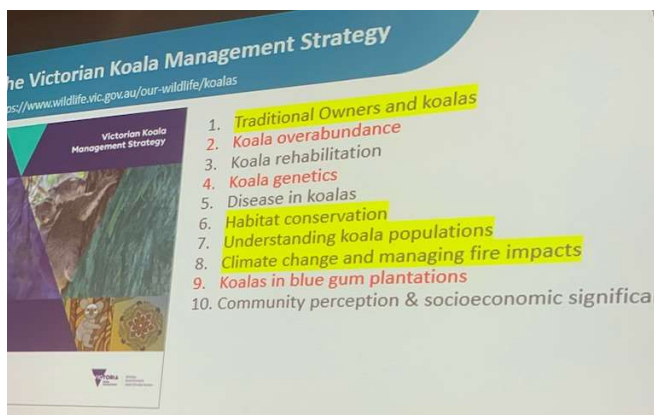
Ballarat and Moorabool Koalas were the focus of attention at the Koala Forum, held at the Eureka Centre Ballarat on Thursday September 14th 2023.

The Forum was opened by Ballarat's Cr Belinda Coates. Ms Joanne Cuscaden, City of Ballarat Executive Manager Development Facilitation, spoke about the new Ballarat Biodiversity Plan.

Conservation Biology, Deakin University, speaking about the new Victorian Koala Management Strategy and what it means for Ballarat.



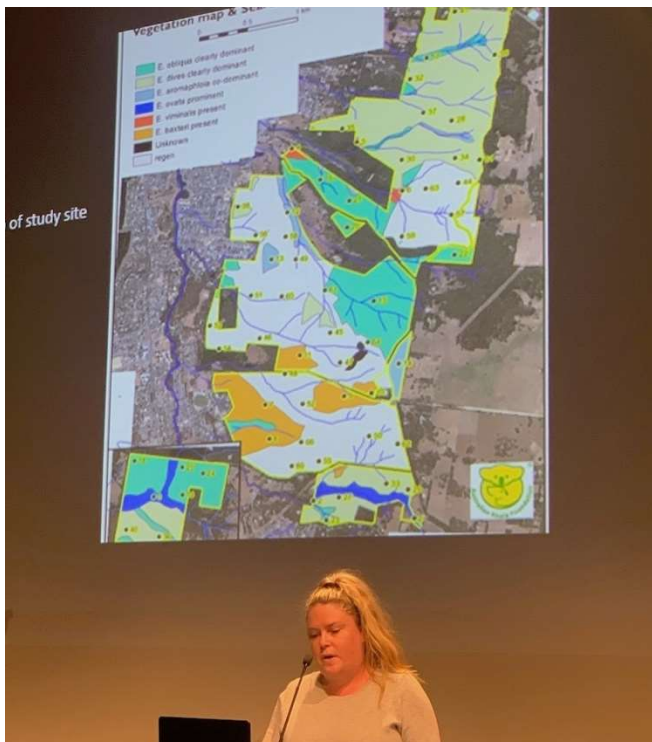
Dr Cathy Robinson, Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO Land and Water, National Koala Monitoring Program and Mr Jackson Cass Landcare Coordinator, Moorabool Catchment Landcare Group, each speaking about the National Koala monitoring plan and how it is working in Ballarat and Moorabool areas.



Dr Desley Whisson, Senior Lecturer in Wildlife and



Mr Jackson Cass explaining the Koala monitoring work in the Moorabool and Ballarat localities.



Ms Louise Jory, University of Melbourne student, presented her findings from a 2-year Koala scat study in Woowookarung Regional Park.

At the end of the forum, participants were asked to consider how to re-energise and improve the Koala Plan as part of the forthcoming CoB Biodiversity Strategy. The participants completed a survey finding:

- 'Stronger protection of large remnant native trees' topping the list.
- "Active native vegetation retention on private land" and "creeks within development projects. protected/restored to enhance biodiversity".
- Wildlife road crossings, wildlife signage and a Ballarat Environment Restoration Fund.

Comments included: "How to identify Koalas in the habitat by scats, marks on trees" and "Reduce speed limits where Koala populations exist".

The survey results will be utilised in the FoCC submission to the now open "Ballarat Biodiversity Strategy".

2. FoCC "Biodiversity Strategy" Meeting
7 - 9pm Wednesday October 4th 2023
Buninyong Community House
407 Warrenheip St, Buninyong
All friends and members invited

Agenda:

1. President's report
2. An overview of key parts of the 3 strategies from a Corridor perspective
3. A short "conversation kit" workshop
4. Round table identification of Biodiversity items for inclusion in the FoCC response

Overview

The City of Ballarat has the three following draft strategies/studies out for public comment/input.

- 1) Draft Housing Strategy:

<https://mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au/ballarat-housing-strategy-2023-2041>

- 2) Draft Neighbourhood Character Study

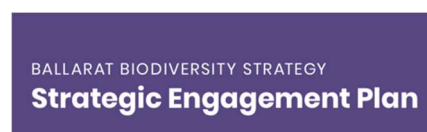
- 3) Draft Biodiversity Strategy.

<https://mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au/biodiversity-strategy>

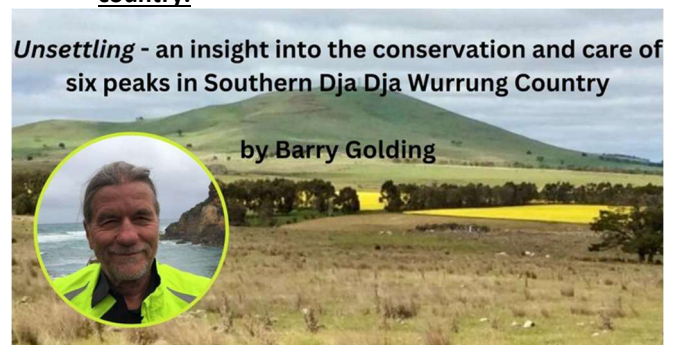
The three strategies/studies are supportive of the Canadian Corridor. The neighbourhood strategy is helpful in its identification of certain neighbourhood areas as Bush Suburban and Bush Residential areas. These new classifications should allow those areas to maintain their current character. Large leafy blocks!

The Biodiversity Strategy is the key to improving protection and enhancement of the natural values of the Corridor and Ballarat in general.

To assist in preparing a response to the strategy, the FoCC general meeting is devoted to working through the CoB conversation kit and then preparing a formal FoCC response to the Strategy.



3. Unsettling -an insight into the conservation and care of six peaks in southern Dja Dja Wurrung country.



Bunanyung Landscape Alliance is proud to present a FREE talk by Prof Barry Golding. A respect for landscape is built into our name. We recognise that landscapes change, and that our perceptions of landscape are strongly contingent on culture. Professor Barry Golding is undertaking a State Library Victoria Fellowship in 2023. His project involves research and writing a book, Six Peaks Speak: Unsettling changes in Southern Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

Ballarat Mechanics Institute, Sturt St Ballarat, 7.30pm Tuesday 10th October 2023

Tickets from

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/unsettling-an-insight-into-landscape-change-from-barry-golding-tickets-713565863707?aff=oddtcreator>

4. Bird of the Month XXIV (September 2023)

Black-faced Cuckooshrike (*Coracina novaehollandiae*)

Look! In the sky. Is it a cuckoo? Is it a shrike? Actually, it's neither – it's a Black-faced Cuckooshrike. Shufflinging is one of its many nicknames. Many an uninitiated observer is sure to be charmed, amazed or even mesmerised by learning about and ticking off their 'life list', this diverse, quirky surprise packet. And thankfully for us, it's relatively

easy to get good views of – and in Ballarat, largely unmistakable.

Taxonomically diverse, Black-faced Cuckooshrike is by-and-large Ballarat's sole representative of the Campephagidae Family, which comprises of Cuckooshrikes, Trillers, and Cicadabirds. The family is characterised by “sleek” medium-sized insectivores, with “smart-looking, soft, dense plumages”. Common among all Cuckooshrikes is their habit of shuffling their wings exaggeratedly upon landing and during courtship (hence, the Shufflewing nickname).

Medium-sized (30-36cm), the Black-faced Cuckoo sports a plumage of white, silver, and grey or bluish grey, and of course the black face/throat. Males and females are indistinguishable, year-round. Immature birds have a grey face, but exhibit black ‘eyeshadow’ extending from the lores to the ear coverts.



Adult Black-faced Cuckooshrike. Image credit: Rob Loveband.

Black-faced Cuckooshrike has a very widespread geographic distribution across Australia. The species inhabits a wide variety of vegetation communities, including rainforests, forests, woodlands, scrublands, tree-lined watercourses, parks, gardens, farms, and orchards.

The species occurs in singles, pairs, parties of up to 30, and occasionally large migratory companies. While some are sedentary or nomadic, there are regular autumn/winter (non-breeding season) migrations northward to the inland/coastal north of Australia, where large winter companies occur.

Breeding season is from August through February. Both parents share nest-building, incubation, and feeding of broods of 2-3. The nest is a proportionally small and inconspicuous, shallow cup/saucer of fine rootlets, bark fibres, leaves, and spiderwebs, built into forked limbs, at heights ranging from 6-20m.

Black-faced Cuckooshrike's diet primarily consists of insects/invertebrates. Insects are most often taken from foliage, with one notable foraging technique being hovering. Hovering is a rare, specialist flight behaviour (achievable by only three other Australian species), characterised by the bird skilfully maintaining its position in the three-dimensional space, above the prey target, all the

while resisting displacement by the wind, usually by means of rapid flapping, and culminates in the bird plunging vertically down on its prey.

Other flight cues to look out for include its ‘easy’, ‘strongly undulating’ flight path, and closed-wing ‘shooting’ when it takes off from a perch. It also has a penchant for perching on exposed limbs.

For non-visual cues, you may identify Black-faced Cuckooshrike by its distinctive vocals. Calls have been described as ‘loud, sharp, churring, harsh yet musical’ or ‘musical, rolling, churring’. Vocal pitch ‘often starts high then falls’, with “chereer, chereer” being sounded during wing-shuffling. Also, harsh ‘skair’ in aggression.

Next time you wander through Woookarung Regional Park, or another local forest patch or farm, don't forget to attune your senses to the churring musical tones, shuffling wings, and skilful flight of the surprise packet that is the Black-faced Cuckooshrike!

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).

5. Bunny Trail Opening

The “Bunny Trail” will be officially opened on **Tuesday October 24th at 10.30am** at the Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve. Full details will be circulated in a few days' time.

6. 8th Wildflower Walk

The eighth wildflower walk will be held between **Sunday October 29th and Sunday November 5th** along the Dementia Forest and Sensory Trail in Woookarung Regional Park

The walking trail start point is the Car Park at the Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail on Katy Ryans Rd.

The Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat and the FoCC have organised the self-guided pop-up wild flower trail signage as shown below.





The walking trail is a gentle walk uphill on formed track. Good footwear is recommended.

7. Bunny Trail volunteer works

Students in the "Compass Program" at Mount Clear College planted over 300 ground cover grasses and sedges in the Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve recently.

The students worked four double sessions at the reserve over a period of three weeks. The energetic students removed hundreds of remnant pine saplings from the reserve before plantings began.



Mt Clear College students planting grasses and sedges beside the Bunny Trail. Image: 13th September 2023.

8. Koala sightings

October to March is Koala breeding season and peak sightings time.

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

focinfo@gmail.com.

Images are gold.

Quite a few Koala sightings this month.



East of Mt Clear College Olympic Av, Mt Clear. Image: Courtesy of Rosie, 8th August 2023



Winlea Court Mt Helen. Image: Courtesy of Wendy, 23rd September 2023



Vincent Drive Mt Helen. Image: Courtesy of Danny 27th September 2023

Observed: A large male koala along a gully near the corner of Gear Av and Yankee Flat Rd on September 28th 2023.

9. Parks Victoria Lavery Avenue listening post

Parks Victoria held a park neighbours and visitors face-to-face Listening Post on the 20 September 4:30 - 6pm at the Lavery Avenue Park entrance.

17 people attended, as well as 4 follow-up emails and calls from people unable to attend. Most attendees were direct park neighbours.

Such a high turnout is considered a success by itself and shows how many people care about the park and its environment.

Parks Victoria is reviewing the information gathered and will consider all feedback received. Main topic discussed was increasing park neighbour and visitor safety, by changing public motor vehicle access close to private property.

No listening post is complete without knowledge sharing on how to tackle environmental weeds, rubbish dumping and how to increase safe recreation within the park.



Local residents in discussion with Parks Vic Ranger Alex. Image 20 September 2023.

10. Donations

The FoCC has been fortunate in gaining several very welcome donations recently.

Commonwealth Bank Ballarat Branch customers were provided with the opportunity to vote for their selected local community organisations.

The FoCC was placed as runner up and has been donated \$250 for FoCC use.

The FoCC gratefully thanks the customers at the branch for their support!

Several individuals have also donated to the FoCC recently and the donations will be very helpful.

11. Park works

Cherry Ballart and Fern Loop shared use trails are now fully signposted. The two loops have very innovative creek crossings and are a delight to walk or cycle along. The Parks Victoria information board is yet to be installed.



FoCC map of the two loops including boardwalks and creek crossings.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



The new direction sign at the Cathie Street Car Park.

12. Another section of Bunny Trail uncovered

Another section of the Bunny Trail at Horwood Avenue has been exposed after a gorse clean-up by contractors. The remnant section of the old Ballarat to Buninyong Railway is believed to be Council land and is approximately 100 metres in length. The old rail line is now quite evident as the image below shows.



The Ballarat to Buninyong Railway cutting looking north from Horwood Avenue. Image: 28th September 2023.

13. Haymes Rd VCAT update

The FoCC is an objector to a development application in Haymes Rd, Mt Clear. The City of Ballarat rejected the application late last year. The developer had taken the case to VCAT. The first compulsory conference was held in August. Another compulsory conference is scheduled for December. If no agreement is reached, the case may go to a four-day hearing in February.

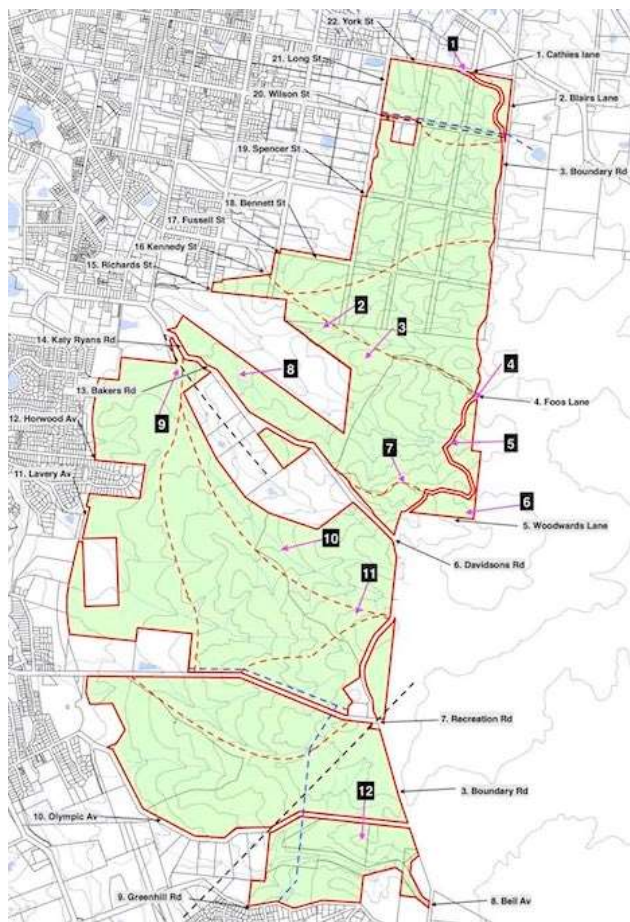
14. Great Australian Backyard Bird Count 16th to 22nd October 2023



The #AussieBirdCount is a great way to connect with the birds in your backyard, no matter where your backyard

might be — whether it's a suburban backyard, a local park, a patch of forest, a farm, down by the beach, or the main street of town.

The FoCC map of suggested bird count sites in Woowookarung Regional Park.



All you need to take part is 20 minutes and your favourite outdoor space - you can do it at home. As well as contributing to BirdLife Australia's knowledge of Aussie Birds, you will have the chance to win some great prizes! Head to the website and register as a Counter today.

<https://aussiebirdcount.org.au>

15. FoCC 7th Annual General Meeting

The FoCC will hold the 7th Annual General Meeting at the Buninyong Community House, 407 Warrenheip St Buninyong at 7pm Wednesday 1st November.

The agenda will include guest speaker, annual reports and election of office bearers.

Members wishing to nominate for the FoCC committee should contact the Secretary at focinfo@gmail.com for a nomination form.

16. Red Cross Fire Emergency App

The Red Cross has produced an emergency app for use in emergencies. With the prospect of a hotter and possible fire prone summer now is the time to consider ways to protect ourselves and our properties.

The app can be sourced from:

<https://www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/prepare/get-prepared-app/>

ARE YOU READY FOR AN EMERGENCY?

THE GET PREPARED APP PUTS EVERYTHING YOU NEED IN ONE PLACE.

- MAKE ACTION PLANS
- FIND YOUR EMERGENCY ALERTS
- SAVE KEY CONTACTS

the power of humanity

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

Google play

App Store

17. 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:

woowookarung@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.

18. Useful information

- **Parks Victoria Woowookarung email address:** woowookarung@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 is for any matters related to wildlife crime, call Crime Stoppers.

19. 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

20. FoCC Facebook and web

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



21. 2023 Calendar of events

October 4 th	FoCC General Meeting re: Ballarat Biodiversity Strategy.
October 10 th	Unsettling with Dr Barry Golding. Ballarat mechanics Institute.
October 16 - 22 nd	Great Australian Backyard Bird Count
October 24 th	Opening of the “Bunny Trail”, Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve at 10.30am.
October 29 – Nov 5	8th Annual Wildflower Walk. Starting at the Dementia trail.
November 1 st	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 Woowookarung 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 ~~1114~~ 1126 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.

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

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