



# FoCC Incorporated Spikey News



Linking the community with Woookarung and the Canadian Corridor  
January 2024 Issue Number 106

## Spikey News features

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### 1. FoCC 2024 Membership 2024 now due.

**Membership** of the FoCC helps the FoCC in its advocacy, education and activities in support of the corridor. All 2023 FoCC members have been notified that their 2024 membership is due and over half have already renewed. Membership runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December each year, Membership fee is \$20 per year. Children of members are free.

#### **To renew your membership:**

- Bank transfer to details: **Bendigo Bank Buninyong**  
BSB 633000 Account No 184147098  
Note: Please add your name to the bank transfer and email [focinfo@gmail.com](mailto:focinfo@gmail.com) your name and the date of the transaction. If your postal address has changed, please let us know.
- You can pay for **membership** via Trybooking at:  
<https://www.trybooking.com/CFLFU>
- Cost is \$20.50 via Trybooking. You can also make a donation of any size via this process.
- Payment to the Treasurer at a FoCC meeting or Cheques should be made out to "FoCC Incorporated" and addressed to:

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

## **New Members**

New members are most welcome:

Applications after July are credited to the next year. Membership forms are [available online](#) or email [focinfo@gmail.com](mailto:focinfo@gmail.com)

A membership form accompanies this Spikey News copy.

### 2. **Cherry Ballart and Fern Loop evening walk**

The FoCC is hosting an evening walk on the Cherry Ballarat and Fern loop at 7pm on **Wednesday February 14<sup>th</sup>**. The trail has ups and downs on a couple of steep bits. Good walking footwear and long trousers are recommended. Bring own coats, mossie repellent and water. The FoCC will be releasing a new **Loop trail guide** at the walk.



Loop direction sign, Cathie Street car park. Image 10<sup>th</sup>  
January 2024

## **Meeting point**

Cathie Street car park at the corner of Cathie St and York St Ballarat East. Note parking is tight at the car park. Parking is best on the city side of York St or Cathie Street and walk the last 50 to 100 meters.

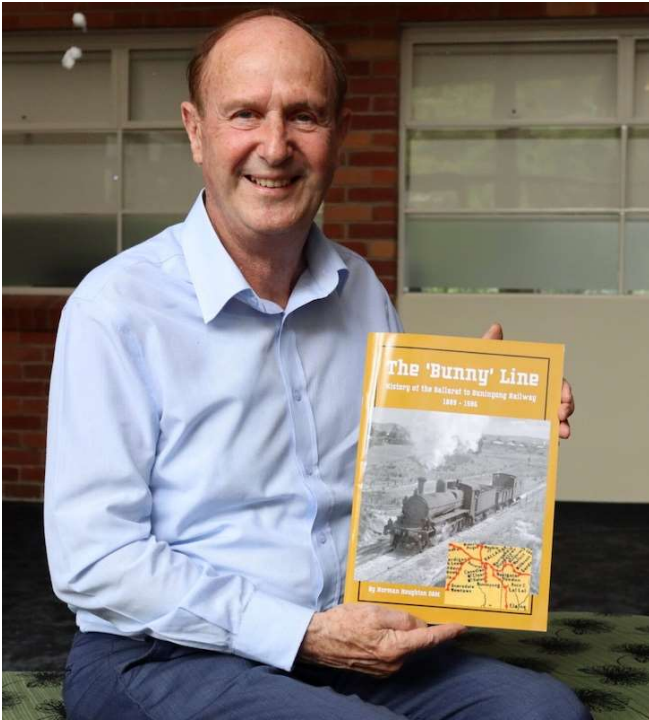


Cathie St Car Park location.

### 3. **Bunny Line Book released and local talk**

The “Bunny Line” will be the focus of a talk at 7pm on 13<sup>th</sup> March at Earth Ed, Olympic Avenue, Mt Clear.

Norm Houghton author and historian will be talking about his new book “The Bunny Line”.



Bunny Line author Norm Houghton. Image: Courtesy Ballarat Times, page 12, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

*Trains ran between the city centre and Buninyong from 1889, primarily in the form of little tank engines, particularly F class locomotives, with two carriages. “By the late-1920s, numbers began dropping off due to increasing motor car ownership. The service was discontinued in 1930 on economic grounds and replaced with a Davis bus.”*

*The line south of the Eureka area ceased operation in 1947 and was pulled from the ground in 1955. Now, parts of the line can be walked, run, or cycled as part of the recreational Bunny Trail pathway. “It renews its role as a transport link,” Houghton said. “I hope people walking along the rail trail will think about what used to chuff up and down the railway, and what was on them.”*

*Houghton has a professional background in cultural heritage management as an historian, archivist, and administrator, having worked at Sovereign Hill and the former Gold Museum, and the Geelong Heritage Centre. Photographs for The ‘Bunny’ Line were sourced from the Buninyong and District Historical Society and Victorian Railways archives. The book is available at [trainworld.net.au](http://trainworld.net.au).”*

Excerpts courtesy of Ballarat Times 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024

### 4. **XMAS drinks at the Lookout**

The 7<sup>th</sup> annual FoCC drinks and nibbles at the **Lookout** was held on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 in cold and overcast conditions.



Intrepid Xmas celebrants at the Lookout. 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

### 5. **Bird of the Month XXVII (January 2024)**

#### **Satin Flycatcher (*Myiagra cyanoleuca*)**

Time is running out fast! Get in quick, and don't miss out! The spring/summer migrants will soon be departing for their non-breeding range up north. And what better focal migrant than the Satin Flycatcher. Vocally distinct for your ease of identifying its call/song, this chatterbox will announce itself with its vocal presence. Once you've located it by sound, greeting you will be the sleekest of small, feathered friends – well worth a look through binoculars!



Left: adult male Satin Flycatcher. Right: adult female Satin Flycatcher. Image credit: Rob Loveband.

The Satin Flycatcher is a smallish (15-18cm) insectivorous passerine (i.e. songbird), belonging to Family Monarchidae (which also comprises Magpie-larks; Fantails, including Willie Wagtail; Monarchs, etc.). The species exhibits sexual dimorphism (meaning males and females have noticeably dissimilar plumages), whereby the male inspires the ‘Satin’ name with its glossy, deep blue-black head, chest, and upperparts, contrasting with its snow-white underparts – dapper like a tuxedo-clad maestro! The female, meanwhile, has a rich orange-rufous chin, throat and breast, white underparts, and upperparts that are a slightly duskier blue-black than that of the males. The species also has a crest of gently-sloping erectile crown feathers, which are often raised when singing. (Note: Observers are to be

cautioned that both sexes of the closely-related Leaden Flycatcher (*Myiagra rubecula*) look remarkably similar to its Satin counterpart. Clear views/photographs in good light are often needed, sometimes even by experts contending with ID, to distinguish the diagnostic features between the two congeners. Admittedly, Satin is much more common than Leaden, an occasional visitor to Ballarat, outnumbering Leaden’s reporting frequency by a ratio of more than 50:1. Nonetheless, it’s useful to be wise to the differences, to deduce whether a rarity is to be ruled in or out. Refer to the table below for advanced ID tips).

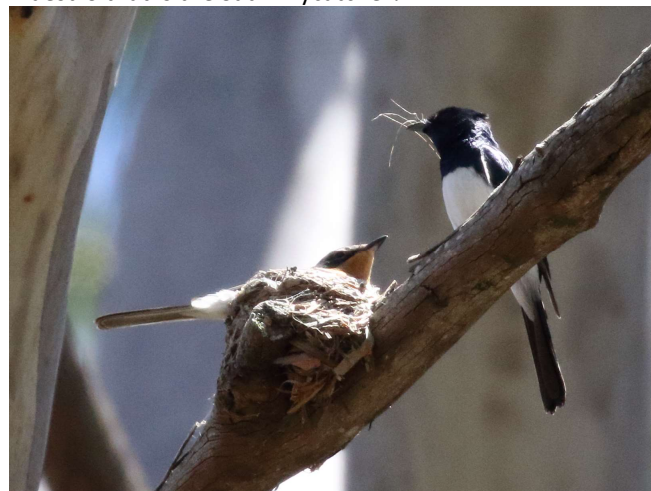
Diagnostic feature	Satin Flycatcher	Leaden Flycatcher
Head, upperparts (both sexes)	Uniformly glossy, deep blue-black, with sheen	Duller, lead-grey; head, and especially lores (i.e. plumage between eye, bill) darker than elsewhere
Undertail (both sexes)	Dark grey	Paler grey
Bib (males)	White belly upcurves into blue breast	Square-cut boundary between blue and white
Wing feather edgings (females)	Buff (beige) or warm brown	Silver
Vocals	[Refer below]	“Squank”
Habitat	Moist forests of all altitudes	Mostly drier forest, with little understorey, at low-mid altitude

Needing auditory cues? The Satin Flycatcher typically betrays its whereabouts with its conspicuous vocals – heard first, seen second. So, what to listen out for? Descriptions of its vocals include ‘repeated, loud, piping “towhee-toowhee”’, ‘clear, high-pitched “to-weir-to-weir-to-weir”’, and ‘repeated, churring, grinding “tzzeep”’. Also, ‘sharp, metallic, rising whistle: “chwee-wip, chwee-wip, chwee-wip”’, and ‘harsh, grating, buzzes, repeated often’. Note, the descriptors of ‘grinding’ and ‘metallic’ align well with the similar, “scissor-grinder” vocals of the closely-related, white-throated, Restless Flycatcher (*Myiagra inquieta*) of farmlands; therefore, if one can perceive birdsong as sounding like what one might conceivably relate to a scissor-grinder, then, habitat permitting, you could well have yourself a Satin Flycatcher, or at least one of the *Myiagra* Flycatchers.

The breeding habitat of the Satin Flycatcher is moist forests, especially those of tall overstorey community, characterised by gullies. Drier, more open forests may be transitioned to for foraging by loose groups of adults and newly fledged young. Loose colonies of 2-5 pairs may nest communally, with nests spaced 20-50m apart. Breeding season is September through March. Both sexes build the cup-shaped nest, incubate the clutch of three (3) eggs, and feed the young. The broad-based nest of shredded bark, grass, and lichen, is bound together by spiderwebs, and built into a horizontal branch, with overhanging foliage, at heights of 3-25m. The incubation period lasts 17 days. Satin Flycatchers forage energetically in the mid-, and upper-canopy, taking insects on the wing. Distribution encompasses temperate Victoria, Tasmania, the coastal/subcoastal range of the Eastern Seaboard (NSW, QLD), where it breeds, and PNG and Indonesia where it ‘winters’ (i.e. its non-breeding range). The Satin Flycatcher’s extinction risk is classified as ‘Least Concern’ globally, and ‘Secure’ federally and in Victoria, but the

species is undergoing a ‘Decreasing’ population trend, thus considered to be in decline.

Next time you wander through Woookarung Regional Park, Union Jack Reserve, or another local forest patch – look and listen out for the buzzing, dapper, tuxedo-clad maestro that is the Satin Flycatcher!



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

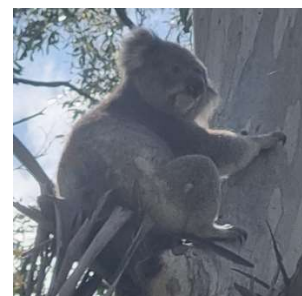
October to March is Koala breeding season and peak sightings time.

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

Images are gold.



Hoveys Rd, Garibaldi. Koala image courtesy of Stephen 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023



Near Nuggety Dam Nerrina. Image courtesy of Brett 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023



Long St Ballarat East. Image courtesy of Jessica, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023



Mt Buninyong. Image courtesy of Coral, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023



Grasstree Creek (Cherry Ballarat Loop). Image courtesy of Pat, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023.



Union Jack Reserve, Buninyong. Image courtesy of Joel. Image 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023



Union Jack Reserve Buninyong. Image courtesy of Jess. 27<sup>th</sup> December 2024



Union Jack Reserve Buninyong. Image courtesy of Jess. 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024



Mt Buninyong south side. Image courtesy of Jeff, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2024

An injured koala was reported to wildlife rescuers in Brown Hill in November 2023. Despite the rescuers best efforts, the Koala did not survive.

### 7. Vale Gavin Jamieson

Gavin was an early supporter of the Friends, the Canadian Forest and the move to create a park and a well conservationist.

He had great passion for native species and for bee keeping, His knowledge of eucalyptus species was simply mind boggling. A sad passing.

### 8. Spotted Hyacinth Orchid (Dipodium pardalinum)

This species is listed as "rare" on the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries' advisory list of rare or threatened plants in Victoria and "vulnerable" in South

Australia. Several other specimens were located on Clay Rd, Clayton St as well as the Lookout.



Orchid near the Lookout, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Image courtesy of Rick.

### 9. Stubble quail found in Park

A chance sighting a stubble quail and four chicks at the south end of Dozed Rd Mt Clear is most interesting. Stubble quail are quite common in grassland areas and have been recorded north of Ballarat. The hen and chicks were crossing the track in a open grassy area. Stubble Quail are a new species for the Park and demonstrates that the Woookarung Regional Park is a haven for biodiversity.



The small circle contains the hen whilst the larger circle contains four very hard to see chicks. Image 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024.



Stubble Quail. Courtesy of iNaturalist.

#### 10. City of Ballarat Open Space Consultation

The City of Ballarat held an Open Space strategy consultation on My Say on the Cities website during December and January.

Many people responded with their observations and wishes.

The next step is for the City to formalise an Open Space strategy proposal for further discussion and consultation.

The last Ballarat Open Space Strategy was released in 2008 and is in need of updating.

The 2008 strategy contained the following statement about the then **Canadian Forest** as follows:

*“Encourage DSE to continue to maintain Canadian Forest in accordance with the Forest Management Plan – Midlands Forest Management Area (DNRE; 1996) and encourage the preparation of a site-specific Management Plan for Canadian Forest which is designated as a regional Conservation (Bushland, Native Grassland and Wetland) open space.”*

Ref: Ballarat Open Space Strategy 2008 Vol 1 Page 117

History now records that a “Strategic Directions” management plan is in place for the forest with new trails, facilities, fire control measures, revegetation and weed and rubbish control at the fore front.

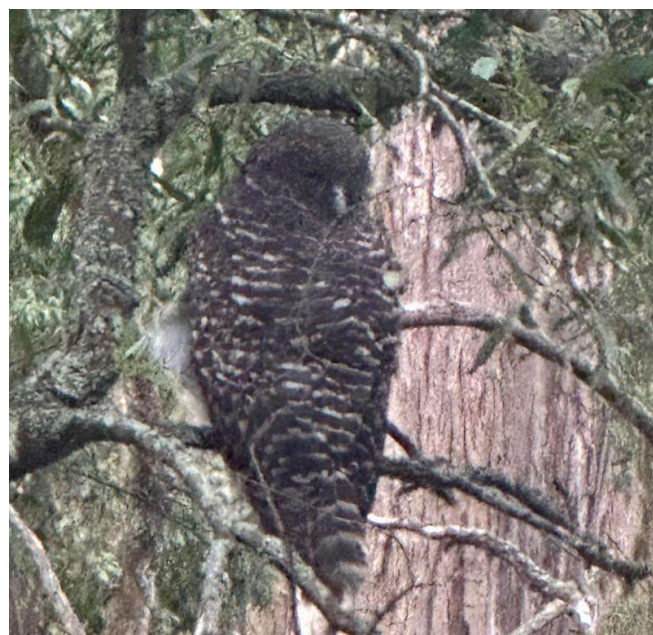
#### 11. Powerful Owl spotted in Union Jack Reserve

“After an unplanned hiatus in sightings and advocacy, a Powerful Owl sighting near Buninyong marks a timely reminder to raise awareness for this elusive owl. With a conservation status of ‘Vulnerable’ in Victoria, the species and its habitat is legislatively significant and requires strong protection. Atop the food chain, Powerful Owls play an ecological role of irreplaceable importance — that is, keeping possum populations from becoming overabundant, which, without the Powerful Owls’ predation, may lead to ecosystem imbalance and unsustainable browsing, i.e. possible tree damage.

Powerful Owls remind us of the importance of large old trees, as these owls and much of its prey, require (very large) hollows for breeding success and shelter. The species suffers from reduction in hollow-bearing trees, and secondary rodenticide poisoning. Where practicable, please withhold tree removal, and opt for non-poisonous means of rodent control.

At FoCC, we are fielding local sighting reports (locations confidential) of Powerful Owls, and ask you to reach out to us if you believe you’ve sighted one (bonus points for photographic evidence!). We’ve been curating a highly confidential database (please don’t disclose specific location details on social media) of sightings (56 so far, since 1995), and a sightings distribution map. All in the endeavour to improve our understanding of the Powerful Owl’s local population and its habitat. We empower locals of all knowledge/skill levels to not be afraid of reporting false alarms (misidentifications), as false alarms for something ordinary are much preferable to no alarm for something extraordinary. Every little bit of data helps! For ID pointers and general information, please refer to the link (<https://www.focc.asn.au/birdofthemonth/>) to the Powerful Owl Bird of the Month (ed XIII, Sept 2022) column. “

Article courtesy of Joel



Powerful Owl in Union Jack reserve image. Courtesy of Jess. 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024

#### 12. Park works

##### **Wilson St gorse removal**

Central Highlands Water contractors AFP Civil removed a large amount of gorse from along the water and power line easement on the north side of Wilson St in the Park. The removal was done over a few days in December by a very efficient grooming machine. See iamge.

The easement had been a hot spot for 4WD activity and rubbish dumping. This is another dumping spot being dealt with appropriately.

Future work will include gates at each end to control vehicle access and spot spraying of any re-emerging gorse.

A Christmas present for the park.

Well done Central Highlands Water!



AFP Civil gorse grooming machine. Image 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.



Cleared area under the power lines and the water easement. Image 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### Katy Ryans Rd Penny Leaf track and Boundary Rd gorse and broom removal.

Parks Victoria Eco Blade contractor has been busy removing gorse and broom at three sites in the Park.

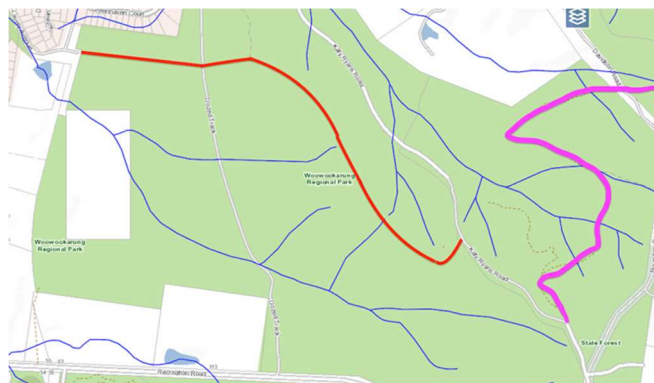
- Katy Ryans Rd
- Penny Leaf Track
- East side of Boundary and south of Foes Lane.



Parks Victoria's contractor's Eco Blade in action opposite the Dementia Trail entrance in Katy Ryans Rd Mt Clear. Image 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024.



Penny leaf track gorse removal. This track had become overgrown. Penny leaf track runs from Lavery Avenue eastwards to the Nature Trail at Katy Ryans Rd. Image 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024



Penny leaf trail in red and nature trail in purple. Eventually they will connect. Map FoCC.

### Grasree Creek trail access works

The Grasree Creek Trail runs east along Grasree Creek from Joseph St, Canadian and enters the Park at the corner of Long and Spencer St, Canadian.

Parks Victoria contractors are filling in the ruts and grooves along the trail east of Long St. This is a welcome Parks Vic initiative along with the Grasree Creek Trail being having the City of Ballarat trail works in December. (See next article 13)



Gravel pile with the hard to see contractors Bobcat in the centre of the image at work. Image 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

### 13. City of Ballarat Grasree Creek Trail extension completed

The Grasree Creek Trail extension is now a reality.

City of Ballarat contractors have put the finishing touches to the long-awaited trail. Earthworks involved installation of drainage piping for two water courses and a mining water race during December 2023. The meandering trail runs from Richards St through to Fussell St and the Pax Hill Scout Camp. The trail was first mooted in 2014 by the FoCC. Some ground cover planting and trail signage are yet to be done. Well done City of Ballarat!



Richards St Entrance to trail. Image 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024



Fussell St end. Image 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024

#### 14. Natures Stewards courses for 2024

After two great Spring **Nature Stewards** programs in 2022 & 2023 the City of Ballarat are proud to announce that the first Autumn Nature Stewards program is open to registrations!

If you, friends, family or colleagues are interested in learning more about the natural environment in a fun, friendly and engaging way then Nature Stewards is for you:

**Course info:** <https://vnpa.org.au/programs/nature-stewards-3/>

**Application page:** <https://vnpa.org.au/apply-for-nature-stewards/>

Applications close **Sun March 24<sup>th</sup> 2024** and spaces are limited

This program is sponsored by the City of Ballarat and is an excellent program to learn more about the natural environment.

Great for volunteers, friends' groups and landholders.



## Discover the world around you

Are you keen to connect with nature and meet other like-minded friends? Why not take a Nature Stewards course!

- Learn more about your local and Victorian environment.
- Explore new employment opportunities.
- Hear from experts spanning Traditional Owners, Council, CSIRO, volunteering and industry.
- Find ways to connect with and care for nature.

#### Details

10 x Classes: 9.30 am to 12.30pm  
4-6 Field Sessions: 1.30 to 4.30pm  
after classes on given dates

#### When

Saturdays, 6 April to 15 June 2024  
excluding King's Birthday long weekend

#### Where

Lucas Community Hub and Clarksdale Bird Sanctuary

#### Cost

City of Ballarat residents: \$90  
Non-residents: \$350 / \$90 concession\*  
\*full time students, health care card & pensioner card holders

**Applications open now!**

For more info & to apply go to [vnpa.org.au/naturestewards](https://vnpa.org.au/naturestewards)



#### 15. Landcare grant

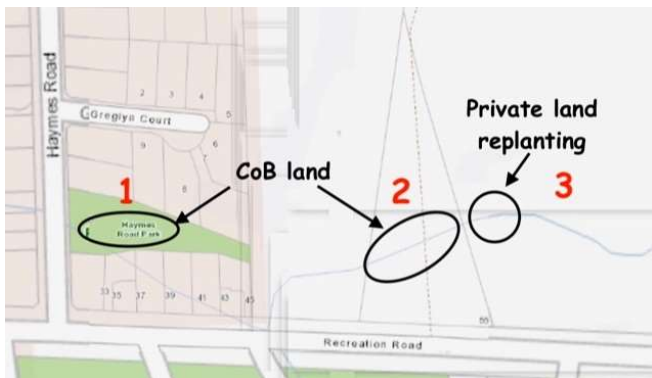
The FoCC was awarded a Victorian Government Landcare Grant 2023 valued at \$6127, in October last year.

The grant was announced by then Minister for Environment Hon Ingrid Stitt and is to "Restore a Canadian Creek tributary in Mt Clear including Haymes Rd Park".

Over 500 trees, shrubs and grasses will be planted at the 3 sites during winter this year.

The City of Ballarat vegetation crew have assisted the project by removing most of the remaining pine trees in the Recreation Rd Bushland Reserve.

What was once pine infested block is now on its way to being restored to quality bushland.



The 3 planting sites which are scheduled to be planted on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024. FoCC map

### Land preparation and Pine removal

**Site 2** City of Ballarat vegetation crew cleared the last of the pine trees on the Recreation Road Bushland Reserve over summer. It is surprising is how good the remnant vegetation is once the pines are gone.

**Site 3** of the Grant is along the creek, east of the Bunny Trail and on private property.

A contractor felled over 200 pine tree to make way for the replanting in winter this year with native trees and shrubs.



Contracted pine tree removal underway adjacent to the creek. Image 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024

The first replanting working bee is scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

### 16. Bunny Trail Loop map

The Bunny trail loop map and guide was published for the opening of the Bunny Trail last month.

The Bunny Trail Loop Map PDF can be accessed at:

<https://www.focc.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/BunnyTrail-Trifold.pdf>

### 17. Smart Living Expo Buninyong Sunday February 25<sup>th</sup>

The FoCC will host a stall at the **2024 Smart Living Expo Buninyong** on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at Royal Park, Buninyong.

Always a good time to catch up with Friends and see and talk about sustainability opportunities.

Ideal place to pick up one of our brochures.

### 18. Vandals at the Dementia Trail

Vandals attacked the Dementias Trail Rotunda panels and nearby signs over the weekend of January 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. If anyone observed or has any information, please contact Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or email: [woovookarung@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:woovookarung@parks.vic.gov.au)



Vandalism at the Dementia Trail Rotunda. Image 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

### 19. 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.

### 20. 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>

- **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.

### 21. FoCC Facebook and web

The FoCC has well over 1100 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](mailto:webmaster@focc.asn.au)



Any opinions expressed in **Spikey News** are made in by the editors in good faith 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 [focinfo@gmail.com](mailto:focinfo@gmail.com)

## 22. 2024 Calendar of events

Feb 14 <sup>th</sup>	FoCC Cherry Ballart and Fern loop walk. 7pm Cathie St car park.
Feb 25 <sup>th</sup>	Smart Living Expo Buninyong stall 10am to 3pm.
March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Clean Up Australia, site meeting point. Wilson St Water tanks.
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	"The Bunny Line" a talk by Norm Houghton at Earth Ed Olympic Ave Mt clear 7pm start.
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	FoCC General Meeting – Biodiversity
April 21 <sup>st</sup>	Memory walk jog at Lake Wendouree. Dementia Australia.
May 19 <sup>th</sup>	Ballarat Heritage Festival: 1pm Guided north end mining walk
June 19 <sup>th</sup>	FoCC General Meeting: Focus on Fauna – Echidnas, birds of prey etc
July 21 <sup>st</sup>	Revegetation planting at Recreation Road Bushland Reserve
August 4 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup> Annual tree planting. Woovookarung RP, Dozed Rd area.
September	FoCC Sunday afternoon visit to Clarksdale Bird Sanctuary Date Tba
October	Great Australian Backyard Bird Count
October	9 <sup>th</sup> Annual Wildflower Walk. Date Tba
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting
December 6 <sup>th</sup>	Drinks at the Lookout

**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 ~~1137~~ 1141 subscribers. Welcome to all new friends.

**Spikey News** is generally published monthly. Friends wishing to contribute articles to **Spikey News** 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.