



FoCC Incorporated Spikey News



Linking the community with Woookarung and the Canadian Corridor
August 2025 Issue Number 123

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1. 6300 trees, shrubs and grasses planted by 716 enthusiastic volunteers over 22 days.

FoCC volunteers, including students, planted 6300 trees, shrubs and grasses, using 6 tons or 18900 stakes and 6300 guards.

2200 leaflets were letterboxed in neighbourhoods adjacent to sites by enthusiastic walkers. And 50 kgs of rubbish was collected whilst preparing sites. Hundreds of sausages cooked by the wonderful Rotary Clubs of Ballarat.

Numerous friends shared their emails and Facebook posts and encouraged others to join in. Those individual actions helped make the plantings successful.

The 200 remaining plants will be planted on October 4th by the "Natures Stewards" volunteers bringing the total plantings to 6500.

A big thanks to these organisations in making the plantings happen.

- Ballarat Courier
- Ballarat Garden Supplies
- Ballarat Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation
- Ballarat Times
- City of Ballarat
- Damascus College
- Hands on Learning teachers
- Mount Clear College
- Mount Rowan College
- Woodmans Hill College
- Ross St Building supplies

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- Smart Pix signs
- Rotary clubs of
 - Alfredton
 - Ballarat
 - Ballarat East (planting day was cancelled)
 - Ballarat South
 - Ballarat West
 - Wendouree Breakfast
- Voice FM
- Wadawurrung Indigenous Nursery Bostok

Soapy's Dam 31st August



Planters at Soapy's Dam. Image 31st August 2025



Rotary Sausage sizzle at Soapy's Dam. 31st August 2025

Sailors Gully 17th August



50 volunteers planted 300 plants along Sailors Gully reserve Mt Clear. Image 17th August 2025

Canadian Creek 10th August

57 Volunteers planted 700 trees shrubs and grasses in a 2-hour session.



Njyah, Alayka and Ash doing their bit. Image 10th August 2025.

Lal Lal Drain (Site 2) August 3rd FoCC images



61 Friends planted 500 trees and mostly shrubs and grasses along Lal Lal Drain. Image 3rd August 2025.

2. Rotary support and sausage sizzle.

The Rotary Club of Ballarat South catered for the Canadian Creek planting, the Rotary Club of Alfredton catered for the Dozed Tk planting and the Rotary Club of Wendouree catered for the Soapy's Dam planting.

Rotarians ran the on-site volunteer registration and provided support for the plantings.

Many thanks to the wonderful Rotary volunteers who helped make the planting go exceptionally well.



The wonderful Rotary BBQ set up at Lal Lal Drain 3rd August 2025. Image courtesy of Peter.



3. School plantings - 2065 trees, shrubs and grasses planted by 295 students

The FoCC hosted 13 school planting days involving 295 students from four schools between June 17th and August 27th.

The largest group was 80 students and the smallest group was 4.

Participating schools were Damascus College, Mount Clear College, Mount Rowan College and Woodmans Hill College.

A total of 2065 trees, shrubs and grasses were planted by the students on Soapy's Dam and on the east side of the Bunny Trail in Woookarung Regional Park

The FoCC volunteers assisting, praised the students and teachers for their wonderful work and interest in landscape restoration activities.

Special thanks to Jo for unstinting dedication to providing sausage sizzles to the students. Aably assisted by Judith, Tracie, Chris, Ric, Mark, Tarn and Peter working in wet and windy conditions on some days.

Some students were also involved in the FoCC's community tree plantings as well.

4. The Urban Ripple restoration project

The restoration project is funded from the Victoria Government's, Green Link fund. A total grant of \$701000 has been awarded to the Bunanyung Landscape Alliance, and in partnership with the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group to revegetate waterways in Ballarat. As part of the project the FoCC agreed to plant 6500 trees, shrubs and grasses on four sites in the Corridor.

5. Official launch of the Urban Ripple Project

Michaela Settle MP officially launched the Urban Ripple project on the FoCC Canadian Creek site near Hocking Avenue Mt Clear on Friday 8th August 2025.



Landcare leaders with Michaela Settle MP. Image courtesy of Boyana, 8th August 2025

Ms Settle said "it was wonderful to be at the launch of the Urban Ripple Project today — a community-led effort to restore Ballarat's waterways.

Backed by the Victorian Government's Green Links Program, this project will see 39,500 indigenous plants established across 13 sites, rejuvenating 80.5 hectares and nearly 10 kilometres of the Yarrowee River and its tributaries.

A huge thank you to the Bunanyung Landscape Alliance, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group, local Landcare groups, and the passionate volunteers making this happen. Together, we're restoring our precious waterways, supporting local biodiversity, and caring for Country. "

Source: M Settle Facebook page.

6. Bird of the Month XLIV (August 2025)

Brown Falcon (*Falco berigora*)

Any time a species is encountered at a site for the first time (let alone after 145 eBird checklists at Union Jack Reserve, Buninyong), that is cause for excitement — always rewarding to increase a site's species tally! Without further ado, behold the species behind the site-first encounter, Bird of the Month's first falcon, the Brown Falcon!



Adult Brown Falcon. Image credit: Rob Loveband.

The Brown Falcon is a medium-sized (40-50cm) falcon, and one of Australia's most common, widespread raptors. Interestingly, it is also one of Australia's most variable-plumaged birds. Despite the misleading name, Brown Falcons come in 3 morphs, i.e. light, dark, and rufous — each of which pose identification challenges with other raptors (refer to our webpage for an infographic ID guide). Here in southeast Australia, our most common variant is the light morph, but all morphs are the same species (not even separated into subspecies/races), meaning theoretically all different colour morphs could appear in the same clutch of siblings. Common denominators present in all colour morphs — and therefore useful in ruling out other species — include the following: (1) the 'double tear drop', i.e. a stripe either side of the eye; (2) short trousers, always dark or red-brown (never pale!); (3) pale underwing; and (4) conspicuous barring of wings/ tail.

Did you know???

Falcons and kestrels (Family Falconidae within Order Falconiformes) are genetically more closely related to parrots and cockatoos (Family Psittacidae and Cacatuidae, respectively, of the Order Psittaciformes), than they (falcons) are to eagles, hawks and kites (Family Accipitridae within Order Accipitriformes).

Brown Falcons are strongly associated with open farmland. I have visited many farms during my time as an ornithologist, and Brown Falcons have been observed on all of them. Brown Falcons also inhabit plains, open woodlands, forest clearings, tree-lined watercourses, and roadsides, to list a few of local relevance.

By falcons' standards, Brown Falcons are oddballs with a few points of difference. Where most falcons are highly aerodynamic, often with considerably specialised diets — the Brown Falcon is "sluggish" and "clumsy", and has a

generalist diet. While Brown Falcons possess the pointed wingtips (i.e. ‘finger’ feathers clasped together) typical of all falcons, and even join Nankeen Kestrel as a surprising exponent of hovering; its broad, bluntly pointed wings contrast markedly with other falcons’ sharply pointed, crescent-shaped wings that are designed for swift flight. Brown Falcons have a widely varying diet of snakes, lizards, small mammals (i.e. House Mouse, young rabbits), birds, insects, and carrion (e.g. roadkill). Brown Falcons are versatile in their foraging methods, which encompasses gliding, soaring, hovering, diving, ambush from perch start, aerial attacks and tail-chases, flushing prey out of cover, and even stalking prey on-foot. Pairs engage in cooperative hunting.

Breeding season here in the south is August–October. As with all Australian falcons, Brown Falcons do not build their own nests. Pre-existing nests of crows/ravens or raptors are adopted. Both sexes incubate the clutch of 2-3 eggs, but feeding duties of hatchlings are carried out predominately by the female. Young fledge at ~30 days of age. Refer to the webpage edit of [Bird of the Month](#) for a table detailing the sighting’s contextual information and the significance of such an observation.

Brown Falcons are a considerably vociferous species, and indeed ‘The most vocal of Australian raptors’. Vocalisations are characterised by screeches, shrieks, and hoarse chuckles. Interestingly, two field guides liken its high-pitched cackling to a ‘laying hen’, only ‘louder and harsher’, as follows: “‘kairrk-kuk-kukuk”, the first part raucous, rising, the following “kuk-kuk” as a low clucking’. Also, “‘karark”, “‘kar-r-rak”, “‘kairrrrk”, as single calls a few seconds apart’.

Brown Falcons are geographically distributed continent-wide, including Tasmania, and also occur abroad in Papua New Guinea. The species is common throughout, and generally considered non-migratory, but it can be irruptive in response to plagues of House Mouse and locusts. A decreasing population trend is in effect, according to IUCN.

Next time you wander through Woovookarung RP, particularly around its clearings (i.e. former plantations), or the exterior where forest meets open farmland – be sure to scan the sky and leafless branches of dead trees, to try for a chance encounter with the variable-plumaged, versatile predator, and hen-sounding, oddball that is the Brown Falcon!

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.

7. CoB Tool Trailer Grant

The FoCC has received a City of Ballarat “Ballarat Community impact Grant Program” for the “Purchase of Community Tree planting Resource Trailer”. The grant of \$5200 is to purchase a closed tradie style trailer including signage and registration.

The trailer will be used to transport and store the FoCC’s tree planting tools and equipment. A private lock up home has been found for the trailer. Expected delivery is late October.



Artist’s impression of the tool trailer.

8. Friends of Union Jack Creek Desoza Park - Tree planting

The Friends of Union Jack Creek is a small group in Buninyong working to restore Creekside habitat along Union Jack Creek in Desoza Park.

The Union Jack group is a subgroup of the Upper Williamsons Creek Landcare group. The FoCC is committed to providing support.

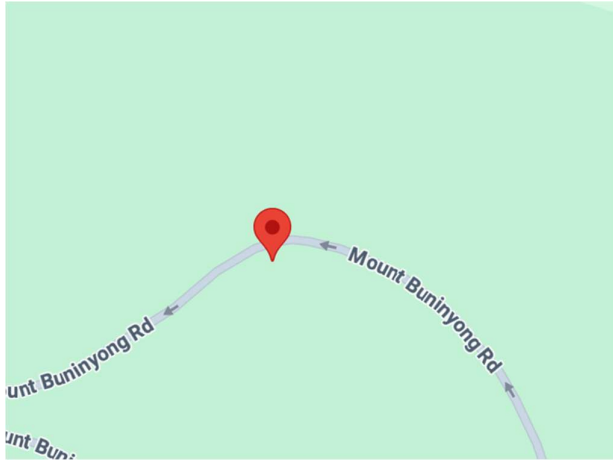
9. Forest Fire Management Planned Burn

A planned burn is to be held in the York St Boundary Rd Wilson St Long St block in the near future.

The first burning is to burn the skirts of the grass trees so as to reduce the intensity of the final burn.

More information at: www.ffm.vic.gov.au

10. Koala Sightings



Koala sighting Mt Buninyong 30th August 2025. Map courtesy of Peter

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 (even if a little blurry).

All Koala sightings are entered into the iNaturalist online data base.

The complete list of sightings can be viewed at <https://www.focc.asn.au/koalas/>

11. Koala habitat removal at 76 Springs Rd. Objection lodged

An application to clear 0.75 hectares of Koala Habitat has been lodged with the City of Ballarat Statutory Planning department.



Map of the Site courtesy of the Courier August 1 2025. Annotation by the FoCC.

The FoCC has lodged an objection to the planned destruction of Koala Habitat.

The application is at odds with the City's Koala Plan, native vegetation removal regulations and the City's recently adopted "Biodiversity Strategy".

An article of the application was published in the Ballarat Courier on August 1st 2025.

The article can be found at the Courier website.

<https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/9029323/brown-hill-subdivision-plans-threaten-koala-habitat-in-ballarat/>

The FoCC believes the land can be subdivided into a lesser number of lots safely leaving the Koala Habitat shown in Yellow in a single lot.

Nearby residents concerned about this development should lodge their own objections to the proposed destruction of Koala Habitat. The council does take notice of objectors. Feel free to contact the FoCC focinfo@gmail.com for information about the proposal and objection processes.

12. Rubbish dumpers, thieves and vandals

The FoCC urges Park friends to report vandals as well as 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**. All information is treated by Parks Victoria Rangers professionally and confidentially.

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>
Wildlife Victoria (03) 8400 7300

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.

14. Membership

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

New members and renewals after July 1 are credited to the next year.

[Membership is 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 over 1300+ 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. 2025 Proposed Calendar

The calendar is prepared by the FoCC committee.

12 th to 19 th October 2025	Wildflower Walk: Dementia Trail, Katy Ryans Rd Mt Clear. Self-guided pop-up walk open for one week.
20 th to 26 th October 2025	Back Yard Bird Count
Wednesday 19 th November	FoCC Annual Meeting and election of office bearers
Friday 5 th December 2025	Drinks at the Lookout

Spikey News is published monthly for the Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated. Registered No A0097535B.

The FoCC is a Landcare group registered with Landcare Victoria Inc and a member of the Yarrowee Leigh Catchment Group.

The purpose of “**Spikey News**” is to link the community to Woookarung Regional Park and the Canadian Corridor Circulation this issue is to ~~1278~~ 1301 subscribers. Welcome to all new friends.

Any opinions expressed in **Spikey News** are made by the editors in good faith and do not officially represent Parks Victoria or the FoCC.

Previous issues of Spikey news can be found at our web site, [here](#).

We are proud to walk this land with the Wadawurrung people and all other First Nations people.

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