



# FriendsNET

Number 45 November 2003

## Parks Victoria grants to be restricted to Parks Victoria land

Louise Baker of Parks Victoria has provided the following explanation of changes in their grants program to apply in the next 2–3 years.

The Parks Victoria Grants Program has previously provided funding to community groups to complete projects both on and off Parks Victoria managed land in this way:

Conservation Support Grants and Priority Conservation Grants were available for groups working *outside* Parks Victoria managed land;

Volunteer Group Grants were provided for groups working *within* Parks Victoria managed land.

The State Government priorities for Parks Victoria over the next 2–3 years are predominantly related to bushfire recovery and also to the implementation of Box-Ironbark and Marine National Parks.

As a result, Parks Victoria has reshaped its Community Grants Program to focus on sites and responsibilities under the direct management of Parks Victoria. The Volunteer Group Grants are now the focus of the program with funds available to Friends groups undertaking works on Parks Victoria managed land.

Consequently for the next 2–3 years funds are no longer available for Conservation Support and Priority Conservation grants or Start Up Grants.

Parks Victoria will continue to support the setting up of new Friends Groups associated with areas managed by Parks Victoria, through a program similar to the Start Up Grants. This new program will be explained in a new version of the 'Friends Kit' to be released shortly.

Parks Victoria recognises and appreciates the valuable contribution that community groups continue to make. A total of 143 Volunteer Group Grant projects worth more than \$500,000 were funded across the state in 2003/2004. Volunteer Group Grants are usually advertised in March each year.

For further information or to obtain an Expression of Interest Form, please contact your local Parks Victoria office, phone 13 1963.

## Also from PV ...

Parks Victoria have released their 'Conservation Reserves Management Strategy'.

It is an important and interesting document. It covers almost 2800 conservation reserves—reserves other than parks under the National Parks Act, Regional Parks, Metropolitan Parks and Reservoir Parks—approximately 500 000 ha, or over 10% of the parks and reserves system.

The strategy relating to 'community and stakeholder partnerships' states: *Consult reserve neighbours and local Friends groups, Biodiversity Committee and relevant Field Naturalists about the management objectives for individual reserves, and discuss options and priorities for future involvement... Encourage increasing involvement of Friends, local Historical Associations and other interest groups in management of priority reserves and sites.*

It goes on to say: *Reserve neighbours and community and friends groups can act as the eyes and ears of reserves managers, often retaining the only detailed knowledge of the recent natural history of reserves and alerting them to management problems. Their ongoing support and involvement is essential for improving management of reserves.*

### THE VICTORIAN FRIENDS NETWORK

The Friends Network provides a means of communication between the hundreds of Victorian community groups which support conservation reserves, natural areas, historic places and indigenous flora and fauna species. Affiliation involves no financial or other obligation.

Through a biennially-elected committee, the Network —

- promotes Friends Groups and assists in the formation of new groups;
- facilitates networking between groups and provides supportive information;
- liaises with management authorities and other relevant organisations;
- distributes *FriendsNET* quarterly (February, May, August, November);
- holds a weekend conference or a one-day seminar for Friends every year;
- produces a Friends Kit in conjunction with Parks Victoria;
- provides Model Rules for incorporation of a Friends Group;
- administers the Best Friend Awards;
- maintains a Web page – [home.vicnet.net.au/~friends](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~friends). This lists all affiliated groups and has an Application for Affiliation form as well as other information useful to groups.

Convener: Bernie Fox – 9741 9859 – [hayburn@bigpond.com](mailto:hayburn@bigpond.com)

Newsletter: Margaret Boyd – 9560 8084 – [bboyd@melbpc.org.au](mailto:bboyd@melbpc.org.au)

Group Liaison: Geoff Durham – 9523 5559 – [gadurham@bigpond.com](mailto:gadurham@bigpond.com)

Web Page: Maelor Himbury – 9374 1902 – [maelor@melbpc.org.au](mailto:maelor@melbpc.org.au)

# Network News & Events



Bernie Fox  
Network Committee  
Convener

## Last call for 'Best Friend 2004' nominations

Is there a member of your group who for more than ten years has made an outstanding contribution through exceptional dedication as a volunteer Friend?

Nominations for the **Best Friend Award 2004** close at the end of this year. Nominations can be accepted only from a Friends Group and must be accompanied by three written supporting references, preferably including one from the appropriate management authority. Regular involvement over a period of at least 10 years is an important consideration. Assessment is by an independent panel. Obtain nomination forms from the VNPA Office or from the Award Secretary, Margaret Boyd, phone 9560 8084.

## Two Network events for 2004

In response to feedback from groups, the Network committee will hold two one-day get-togethers of Friends in 2004:

- a Friends forum on Saturday 17 April (see details next column), and
- a Seminar for Municipal Friends Groups on Saturday 4 September.

## FRIENDS FORUM

Saturday 17 April 2004

Your opportunity to have your say!

**The burning issue of fire**

The Government has accepted the Esplin Report of the Inquiry into the 2002-2003 Victorian Bushfires. What does this mean for parks? A discussion on ecological considerations in fire protection and suppression.

**Water in reserves**

Streams turned into drains are being converted back to streams. We will discuss Friends' involvement in creek rehabilitation, wetlands, Waterwatch and Frogwatch.

**Resourcing**

The parks system has expanded with the creation of Marine and Box-Ironbark parks. The building boom means increased revenue from the Parks Levy. Why all the weeds? Where have all the Rangers gone?

**General Forum**

You can raise any matter relevant to Friends. We are inviting representatives of management authorities. This is the opportunity for an exchange of ideas and constructive dialogue between Friends and land managers.

— continued on page 3

## Groups in Action ...

## The Great Merri Cowpat Pickup

In the newsletter of the Friends of Merri Creek, Wendy Moore reports an unusual activity.

In November last year, four or five hundred cows, attended by a family with horses and dogs, were found along the Merri Creek.

Apparently from a drought stricken area, the stock were illegally grazed up and down the creek from the Craigieburn Grassland Reserve

south to Galada Tamboore. They were watered at the creek, damaging the creek banks and devastating streamside vegetation, including habitat of the Growling Grass Frog. Eventually, just prior to Easter, they were evicted, leaving behind massive amounts of cow dung smothering native vegetation.

These cows were grazed in seriously weedy sections of the creek valley and then on native grassland reserves, like Cooper Street Grassland. For many years Parks Victoria and the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) have been undertaking weed control and replanting in this reserve—all their good work could have been undone.

MCMC organised two Cowpat Pickup days. The Friends of Merri Creek and other volunteers rallied to the cause and twelve ute-fulls and five trailer loads were removed. The Friends newsletter reports: *It was an amazing sight—45 volunteers spread across Cooper Street Grassland picking up cow (and horse) poo, putting it into buckets and bags, then emptying these into wheelbarrows to be ferried across to the vehicles on the track... Let's hope we never have to do such a thing again.*



# Experience Exchange (your space)

We weren't exactly swamped with suggestions in answer to last issue's appeal for 'beating the bunnies' which pull down the guards and eat our obviously tasty planted plants! However, Ann Penaluna of the Friends of Churchill Island informs us that Ranger Scott Campbell, assisted by his Jack Russell terrier 'Jack' has eliminated rabbits from Churchill Island. (You would need a permit – Ed.)

## Has anyone got a different angle on Angled Onion?

Sue and Ken McLean, of Friends of Kangerong, write—

At this time of the year (spring) the edges of McIlroys Rd, Red Hill, are white with Angled Onion except for that part that cuts through Kangerong Flora Reserve. A few years ago we sprayed the cursed plant with Brush-off (15g/100L) wherever it appeared along the road. The result looked promising but the following year it was as bad as ever. Dicamba was tried. Again no apparent change. Now a few plants have appeared at the edge of the road in the reserve so we've tried Brush-off again, but with no confidence in the results.

**Please can someone tell us how to make sure it works?**

Share your questions or ideas – contact any Committee member (see page 1)



*The culmination of three years of work: the grand opening of the Friends of Bunyip State Park's Button-grass Nature Walk, a walk which provides a really rewarding experience.*

### *Friends Forum – from page 2*

Early expressions of interest and suggestions are invited—write to Friends Network c/o VNPA, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton, 3053 or e-mail to [gadurham@bigpond.com](mailto:gadurham@bigpond.com). This will help us finalise the program and give an indication of numbers to help us choose an appropriate venue in the metropolitan area. Full details and a Registration Form in the February FriendsNET.

**Note the date and register your interest now!**

## Geoff's Group Grapevine

We have been asked by a group to suggest activities they could undertake as apparently they are having difficulty in coming up with ideas.

The Network's brochure *Befriend a Park* (available from the VNPA) lists many possibilities, but the following examples from recent group newsletters might provide further inspiration.

Friends of Kurth Kiln have a project to 'build a scale model of the Charcoal Grader as an interactive, functional demonstration display'.

Friends of Mt Beckworth (near Clunes) are monitoring the presence of sheep and are drawing the deficiencies in boundary fences to the attention of neighbours.

Friends of South Surrey Park used a portable petrol-powered hole digger to plant 1600 seedlings.

Friends of Chiltern National Park report a fascinating afternoon at Depot Dam when Dr Phil Suter from the School of Environmental Management and Ecology, La Trobe University, demonstrated how to study freshwater ecology using household plastic containers, ice cube trays, sieves, a pipette and a magnifying glass.

It is a tradition of Friends of Coolart to celebrate Christmas and the end of the year with 'Christmas in the Stables'—a BYO BBQ or picnic tea (drinks provided) followed by carols and a supper of mince pies, shortbread and Christmas cake.

Frogs are in fashion. The indefatigable Robert Bender continues to record them in both Organ Pipes NP and Wilson Reserve, the Friends of Dandenong Valley Parklands are surveying them in Koomba Park and Shepherds Bush, and Friends of Braeside Park are involved in a Melbourne Water Frog Watch program.

Friends of George Tindale Garden hosted a plant and bulb sale on 11 October to raise funds for the gardens.

A mystery bus tour is a November activity of the Friends of the Yarra Valley Park. Last year they ended up at a secret garden in the Dandenongs.

Fifteen species of orchid, five recorded in new locations, was the outcome of the Friends of Morwell National Park one-day Great Orchid Hunt.

Many groups now have web sites but one of the latest is of particular interest. It is the Friends of Braeside Park site at [www.braesideparkfriends.org.au](http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au) designed and installed by 13-year-old Tom Mitchell Ferguson. Tom has undertaken to update the site on a monthly basis.

Happy birthday to the Friends of Brisbane Ranges National Park who celebrated their 21st Birthday on Saturday 11 October. On the same day, the Friends of Bunyip State Park had about 70 people at the formal opening of their Button-grass Nature Walk by John Reid of the Royal Botanic Gardens (see photo above).



*Geoff Durham  
Group Liaison Officer*

## More from Geoff's Group Grapevine ...

# And We Welcome...

Affiliation of the following groups has been formalised. Some have been around for quite a while.

#### Friends of Baluk Willam Bushland

Formed in 1987, this group is involved in restoring and maintaining the significant 150-acre bushland flora reserve at Belgrave South. Note it is the Aboriginal *Willam*, not William. Bernadette Sakina 9754 8218.

#### Friends of the Cobberas

The Cobberas unit of the Alpine National Park is the focus of this group formed by the late Ian Smith in 1996. Activities in this remote area have included brumby exclusion plots. Phyl Akeroyd 5157 5435.

#### Friends of Damper Creek (Mt Waverley)

Friends in this group are involved with one of the most successful creek regeneration projects in the metropolitan area. Dianne Carra 9888 3689.

#### Darebin Parkland Association

Since 1973 this group has worked to improve the environmental and recreational amenity of the Darebin parkland. Graeme Martin 9499 3849.

#### Friends of Emu Bottom Wetlands Reserve

Preservation, restoration and environmental protection is the focus of this group formed in 1994. Garry Bartlett 9744 1923.

#### Friends of the George Tindale Memorial Gardens

Formed in 1984, this group works in these beautiful Dandenong gardens on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays monthly. Rod Cantrill 9763 6745.

#### Granya Heritage & School Management Committee

A formal Management Committee is not normally eligible to affiliate with the Friends Network, but this group has been affiliated because its interests extend to Granya State Park where it works as a Parks Victoria volunteer group. Enid Warnock (02) 6072 9534.

#### Greenlink Yarra Bend

This group incorporates Men of the Trees. The late Minette Russell-Young was deeply involved with both groups. They have had success in revegetation (including understorey) of the Deep Rock area of Yarra Bend Park (Melway 2D D6). Chris Adams 9489 9691.

#### Friends of Greenwich Bay

The group aims to 'preserve, protect, restore and enhance the land abutting the mouth of the Yarra River' (Melway 56 C5). Ann Link 9391 2970.

#### Hughes Creek Group

Hughes Creek is between Ferny Creek and Sassafras. The group is involved in the regeneration and enhancement of the creek reserve. Jenny Francis 9755 1398.

#### The Victorian Malleefowl Recovery Group

For some years this group has conducted systematic surveys in the mallee recording malleefowl activity. Last year over 850 mounds were checked and only 8 were active—the lowest on record—believed to be a consequence of the drought. They held a training weekend at Wyperfeld NP on 11 & 12 October. New members welcomed—contact Ann Stokie 5229 8648, e-mail [annos@iprimus.com.au](mailto:annos@iprimus.com.au).

#### Friends of Stony Creek

Stony Creek enters the Yarra below the Westgate Bridge. The Web page is [au.geocities.com/stonyck](http://au.geocities.com/stonyck). Steven Wilson 9332 3889.

#### Werribee River Association

This group was formed in 1981 as a result of interest in the promotion and improvement of the Werribee River at Werribee. John Forrester 9731 1518.

#### Friends of Willsmere Park and Kew Billabong

This new group already has a Web page: [www.cdr.com.au/fowpkb](http://www.cdr.com.au/fowpkb). It meets on the last Saturday of the month. Tony Michael 9859 6902.

— Geoff Durham

## October Seminar Report

The seminar Friends — *Getting Them, Keeping Them and Keeping Them Safe* — provided much food for thought for the participants.

Included with this newsletter is a brief summary of the main points to emerge. A more comprehensive summary is available on the Network's website [home.vicnet.net.au/~friends](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~friends)

**Have we got your contact details correct? Check on our website [home.vicnet.net.au/~friends](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~friends), or contact Bernie Fox (see box page 1)**

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If undelivered, return to:  
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## FriendsNET

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