



Brisbane Ranges Friends News



Home National Park Park History The Friends Newsletters EVENT CALENDAR Photos - Picasa Links Contacts News

Welcome to the Friends new website -

Little more than an hour drive from Melbourne takes you to one of the state's richest wildflower habitats.

The Brisbane Ranges National Park is about 80km west of Melbourne between



APRIL 2011

In this issue

- New FoBR website
- Park News
- Koalas
- For Your Diary
- Cathy's Column
- Welcome new Friends
- Wombats in the Brissies
- Wildflower Show

Upcoming Events

Sunday 10 April

- propagation for park plantings and the Wildflower Show
- track maintenance within Steiglitz defining the track from the creek to the Catholic church.

Meet at 10am at the old Parks Victoria depot, Ballan Rd Anakie

Don't forget to bring your lunch, hat, drinking water, sturdy shoes, sunblock, gloves, camera, binoculars ...and your smile.

FoBR events usually run from 10am to 4pm-ish but if you can only attend the part of the day you are always welcome to join in for whatever amount of time you can.

Please see note on page 2 about total fire ban days etc.

Friends of Brisbane Ranges inc
C/- Post Office
Anakie VIC 3221

Ph: 5366 0000

Email: cazbarth@yahoo.com.au

Website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/>

ABN: 30 120 139 564 Reg No. A0032647M

New FoBR Website

The first FoBR website was developed by Chris Lindorff back in about 1999. With all the internet development over the years it has of course been modified since but this is the first major change.

The website now includes a substantial amount of information so we hope that it is much more user friendly and easy to find the information you want.

It is an ongoing project so we are keen to hear from you about what YOU want included and if there is anything which is not clear or working well.

Other recent and planned techo developments include -

- We now have a new FoBR email address - friends_br@yahoo.com.au if you have general or wildflower show enquiry.
- Payment of membership fees can now be paid directly into the FoBR account via bank deposit or internet banking. (see below**)
- New photo albums of our wildflowers, fauna, flora, activities etc are being developed so if you have great photos you would like included please sent them to us or contact our email address above.
- We will also have a FoBR group Facebook page where you can perhaps post
 - ◇ a photo you would like identified by other members or
 - ◇ a special plant, animal or bird sighting you would like to tell us about -

eg **Judy Locke really did see the Wombat** - see page 4.

**This year we will be reverting to our original financial year ending 30 June so current membership fees will cover until then. New and renewal fees paid since January will cover the 2011/2012 financial year. In case it is confusing we plan to send you a friendly reminder invoice if your fees are due.

Park News

As we mentioned last month some of our National Park is closed since the heavy rains a few weeks ago and some may remain closed for some time due to the damage caused. Please keep an eye on the [Parks Victoria website](#) for the latest .



The latest is -

- Stony Creek Picnic Ground = Closed
- Anakie Gorge Picnic Ground = Closed - waiting on City of Greater Geelong to repair Gorge Road
- Anakie Gorge Walk = Closed
- Ted Errey Nature Circuit = Closed
- McLeans Highway = Closed between Marshalls and Thompsons Road
- Switch Road = closed
- Lower Stony Creek reservoir and catchment = Closed
- Burchell Trail = Closed between Boar Gully Camp Ground and Old Mill Camp Ground

All public roads have suffered damage with some still closed due to public safety concerns.

Park Staff are working to have major picnic nodes open by the Easter break however this may not be possible due to the extent of damage in some areas. There is an issue with the public accessing closed areas and destroying signage and gates to access closed areas. It is a major concern both for their own safety and they are hindering the rehabilitation process.

Koala research

A week after the long weekend in March, we met at the Anakie Depot with a Friend-Janine Duffy to learn more about Koalas.

Janine told us about the Koala Research she has been doing for many years, about how/ where to find Koalas, to identify them and the importance of doing it all in a non-intrusive way.

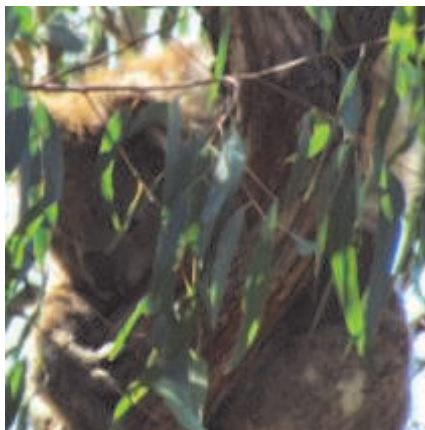
Some may be surprised to know that her research shows that although Koalas most favoured feed tree is believed to be Manna Gum it is only used about 62% of the time with Messmate, Yellow Gum, Swamp Gum, Peppermints and Red Stringybark also being important. A healthy Koala habitat is diverse and includes trees to shelter in as well.

The local Koala population since the 2006 bushfires is the subject of much comment and interest in the area so last month we asked locals to let us know about sightings. Only six people responded about recent Koala sightings so we hope that means few people are telling us rather than an indication of very small number being seen or heard.

After the talk 15 of us including four children headed out to the bush and checked out some trees which are sometimes a bit of a challenge - this is a Manna Gum



We met Mary – chief koala spotter - who introduced us to Georgia Koala.



When the four kids were wonderfully quiet a bullant or march fly decided to create some pain and disturb the peace. Georgia was startled but soon went back to her snooze on such a beautiful warm day.

Georgia has a beautiful coat and was only displaying her two-spots on her back to us for identification. She has a young joey in her pouch which she was certainly not going to show off to us. It would have been born around September - much earlier than the normal breeding time. Maybe she knew there would be plenty of rain this year. Koala joeys are usually born between December and March, and first emerge from the pouch around July/August.

We stood or sat quietly and watched her for about 30 minutes while she slept, had a scratch, slept some more and then it looked like she was bitten on the nose by something - possible a March fly - she too was not too pleased.

Janine found a male also cuddled up in another tree beside the road. A male's coat and muscly build is usually different to a female as well as the other identifiers - face shape and scent gland on the chest which we couldn't see as he was also snoozing in the afternoon sun.



Janine encouraged us all to keep an eye out for our local resident Koalas and use nose patterns and other signs to identify them. She is keen to keep finding out more about how the Brisbane Ranges Koalas are going five years after the 2006 fires which had a large impact on the population. She reports on her research to DSE and Parks Victoria.

Some rules to improve your experiences with Koalas in the wild - for you and them.

- Never touch the tree the Koala is sitting in
- Keep at least 10metres away from any wild koala - if one is found above you - move away immediately
- Do not surround a koala's tree - all humans stay together in a group to avoid causing stress for the koala. Sit or stand quietly.
- Avoid noise or excessive movement around wild koalas. They are sensitive to disturbance.
- Do NOT try to attract their attention by making noises. It may work once but will cause stress. The koala may choose to hide next time you or anyone is around. It also gives inaccurate data on koala behaviour.

And of course **please drive slowly and carefully in koala country!**

For your diary! Join us

All Friends please be reminded that if the event day is declared a Total Fire Ban Day, the activity will be cancelled. This is in line with Parks Victoria's Emergency Management guidelines where on days of extreme or severe fire weather conditions, the park visitor will be strongly advised not to enter or to leave the park.

On days deemed "Code Red", under the National Fire Rating System and issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, all of Parks Victoria's estate will be closed to public access.



Sunday 10 April

- propagation for park plantings and the Wildflower Show
- track maintenance within Steiglitz defining the track from the creek to the Catholic church.

Please welcome the Friends of the You Yangs to our April activity.

The You Yangs is currently closed following damage from heavy rains early this year causing safety hazards including exposed asbestos. So they are coming to assist FoBR. Thank you FoYY - you are most welcome!



Saturday 16 April

Special National Trust and FoBR Heritage Water Works Walk - see page 17 of program www.natrust.com.au/heritage_festival_2011. Anakie Gorge from 2pm. No charge Please contact Colin Cook beforehand on 0427 508 360, 5286 1252 or Colin.Cook@dpi.vic.gov.au to check whether area is open.



Sunday 8 May

WaterWatch - hopefully Stony Creek this time too and **Frogs of the Brissies with Ade Foster**

Saturday 21 May

APS - Australian Native Plant Sale, Bacchus Marsh 9am to 1pm.



Sunday 9 October Brisbane Ranges Wildflower Show

YOU can get involved.

Fungal Ecology workshops are on again this Autumn on Saturdays and Sundays from 23 April to 29 May - from 11am until 5pm at Daylesford, Woodend, Creswick, Trentham, and Wedderburn. \$70. Seminars are being held at Daylesford on Thursday 21 May and Castlemaine on 28 May. See website or email Alison alison@alisonpouliot.com or call 0439 764 344 for details.

FoBR events

If you have ideas of activities for FoBR for this year please email to let us know as we want Friends activities to be relevant and of interest to all of you.

Cathy's Column

Beware of strangers and what they bring. Recently Ron & I were in the Ranges looking for the next instalment of Midge Orchids. To my surprise a vehicle pulled up near ours, a stranger got out and started walking towards us. Oh sorry, I think I misspelled that – it should read ranger. Perhaps a Freudian slip? (sorry Soxy).

Anyway, as we were pondering the virtues of the area, something dropped from the sky and landed right next to me. After the second such event, we all moved to a safer spot. Instead of 'drop bears', we had drop ants – and they were big ones!



Speaking of insects, this one was photographed by a good friend of mine, Rudie Kuitert. It is a Pied Lacewing (*Porismus Strigatus*)



We did actually find the Midge Orchid we were looking for and of course, once we stopped to have a look, there were large numbers of another one in the vicinity.



These are (lt) Tiny Greenhood (*Speculantha parviflora*) and (rt) Red-tip Greenhood (*Speculantha sp. aff. parviflora*);



The top one is a Sharp Midge Orchid (*Corunastylis despectans*). The lower picture is to give you an idea of what makes an orchid photographer's heart race. This is a big colony of Large Autumn Greenhood (*Diplodium sp. aff. revolutum*).

The *Epacris impressa* are starting to show themselves in the truly beautiful display we often get when the conditions are right.

This plant can be seen from a distance and close up it proves why the second part of its name is 'impressa'.



There is a tradition of many plant growers that even if something looks dead, it may not be so don't pull it out until – well I am not sure how long you should wait but from the follow-

ing example, long enough for the moss to grow. I came across this *Xanthorrhoea* stump that proves the point. Obviously it is getting a second burst – so to speak.



And back to the insects. Because of the moisture we received over the past few months, we have had an enormous number of dragon flies. I am not good at getting the ID for these but I love the challenge of getting a picture.



Now back to my opening introduction to things falling on us – have a look upwards at the moment because a lot of Eucalypts are in flower. The flowers are often visited by ants for the nectar so beware.



Until next we meet – enjoy our paradise.

NOTE: The orchid scientific names are those found in the publication by David Jones (*Native Orchids of Australia*) and some are not officially accepted by the Victorian Herbarium but nonetheless are used by various organisations throughout Australia.

Cathy Powers

Wombats in the Brissies

In August 2009 we were amazed to find what looked so much like a wombat hole at Anakie Gorge even though Wombats are NOT found in the Brisbane Ranges!!!



Then almost exactly a year ago Chris Lindorff with a car full of witnesses saw a wombat in the north of the Brisbane Ranges.

Last week Judy Locke also saw a Wombat on the Stony Creek Bridge.



This photo is not our evidence - our wombat/s is/are a bit camera-shy.

We don't have an image yet but if YOU see one please try to get a photo.

We have been assured that alcohol was not involved prior to these special sightings and Judy and Chris should be able to be trusted to know what a wombat looks like.

As Chris asked last year - Are Wombats expanding their territory as the tropical weather shifts southward? Or is it inappropriate releases in the bush? We sure hope there is not just one lonely Wombat and that they decided to move and found the Brissies is a good park to live in!!



Brisbane Ranges WILDFLOWER SHOW 2011

We are well into planning the best Wildflower Show yet ... so why not join us.

More hands less work!

This is OUR opportunity to show off our wonderful local wildflowers with a great display, workshops and tours in October.

This Wildflower Show has been growing in popularity each event and with more than 500 people attending in 2009 from all around Victoria we are anticipating a large crowd this year. Check out our new flyer and more info on [website](#).

What can you get involved with NOW -

- Hand delivering promotional information and posters etc in your home or work area
- Helping us to get publicity into local papers, newsletters etc
- Letting us know of any promotional opportunities you know of or contacts you have
- Helping us to ensure our contact lists are up to date Contacting people
- Start working on your photos that Cathy's column has already inspired you to take.
- Let us know any way YOU think you can help.

We are looking for some help NOW please. Promotion is important in lead up to the show - and YOU can help us get the messages out effectively.

Please contact Beverley at bevjp@westnet.com.au, Vicky at vicky.grosser@gmail.com or Helena at helena@pacific.net.au or call Judy at 5366 0000 for more contact information.

Welcome to the team - Sher Swindon and Melissa Doherty who have volunteered to help with the Show.

A warm welcome to our newest Friends

- ◇ Susan Funder & Gill Gartlan, Bannockburn
- ◇ Tania Chalmers Tarniet
- ◇ Polly Cutcliffe Belmont
- ◇ Felicity Nottingham Beremboke
- ◇ Lynne Hillier Beremboke

New FoBR members are welcome please see our [website](#) - <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fobr/membership.html> for all the details.

Golden Orb Weaver Spiders

I was first attracted to her because she did NOT want to come into our house and she stayed put - all the time upside down in her magnificent golden web which she lovingly maintained. The carcasses of her prey are wrapped in gold silk and hung to show off or deter predators. For nearly two months my "Charlotte" has hung there every day. I have been surprised at her speed when



pursuing her prey and how she shakes the web strongly if someone/thing comes too close.

Such a great year for spiders.

More have appeared around the house since and one large lady chose up high in our courtyard garden which is fully meshed to keep our cats in and birds and critters out - a bird cannot get this clever lady.

This week she left the web and was looking disoriented and awkward. Her ideal spot may not be ideal for hiding her egg sac - a beautiful gold silk ball about 20mm diameter is now hanging from the top of the mesh about 4m away.



She has now settled back into her web.

I will be very disappointed to see her die soon but now

have a wonderful respect for them which has surprised me a bit. Although they are described as common, I hadn't seen one before. Common- how could they? She always looks so regal! Caz