

Feb 2015

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## Upcoming Events

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb, 10AM at Anakie Depot** Tidy up and potting up in the depot. Walk and track definition in the afternoon.

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March, 10AM at Anakie Depot** Activity to be advised.

Note that on days of Total Fire Ban, activities will be cancelled. Brisbane Ranges is in the Central fire district.

**Friends of Brisbane Ranges inc**  
C/- Post Office  
Anakie VIC 3213

Ph: 5366 0000

[email](mailto:friends_br@yahoo.com.au) friends\_br@yahoo.com.au

[Website](http://fobr.org.au) http://fobr.org.au

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/fobrnpp)  
<https://www.facebook.com/fobrnpp>

ABN: 30 120 139 564 Reg No. A0032647M



## Boxy

Peter M Box, ex Ranger in Charge for Moorabool Parks including Brisbane Ranges NP and Steiglitz Historic Park, as from 27 January, has moved on to become Ranger in Charge, Fire and Emergency, Otways – a similar title but a very different role. As this is a newly developed position, he was understandably apprehensive but quietly confident he will manage the role. He will be manager of 27 staff, all employed to manage fire on public land, so I'm sure the role will have its challenges. I will attempt to outline his work history whilst he has been working for the Victorian government.

Boxy started his public service employment in the late eighties working for the Lands Department at Meredith. This office closed and he was transferred to the National Parks division, Conservation, Forests and Lands Department, Anakie workcentre. He became a Field Services Officer and developed a keen eye for weed control and became skilled in road development and maintenance. He later became a ranger within the Brisbane Ranges NP (BRNP) and Steiglitz Historic Park (SHP).

It was in this role he developed extensive knowledge in regard to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC). His passion for the BRNP is absolute, having learnt from Chris Worrall (ex Ranger in Charge BRNP and SHP) the importance of a healthy park with all its environmental and cultural values. His skills in construction and engineering make him a very practical bloke. The Anakie Scrubber, or foot hygiene station for PC control, is an example of this along with his perseverance for perfection. The scrubber design is now sought after from other parks within the nation and New Zealand.

Boxy's good nature and down to earth personality have earned him the respect of many local people around Anakie and Brisbane Ranges, including some of the long term FoBR members who remember him helping out with on ground works. He is also remembered for his sense of humour as evident in some of the earlier FoBR newsletters when he was the Editor!

Now, I can't leave out the subject of a certain caravan resting in one of the sheds at Anakie depot. He loves all things retro and his plan is to rejuvenate this caravan (currently minus a few features such as the outer aluminium covering (only on one side!), with a frame badly in need of repair and a number of other bits and pieces which need attention). I'm sure it will be transformed into a spectacular vintage caravan – but only in Boxy time!

So, we bid Boxy, not farewell but good luck and good times with his new job. And the Otways are not so dissimilar to the Brissies – just lots more green, ridiculously tall eucalypts, lots of impenetrable undergrowth, steep valleys, leeches, wet foggy days, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, yep, just like the Brissies! We thank Boxy for all his support for FoBR, for his ongoing passion for the BRNP and, his powers of persuasion to PV managers in gaining approval to transform the Anakie depot into an important hub for volunteers and the local community. If you would like to contact him, his email and mobile number (0419 883 025) stay the same.

Judy Locke

## Best Friend Award

At the Friends end of year BBQ, a long term FoBR was presented with a special award. Bernie Fox was presented with a Best Friend Award from the Victorian Environment Friends Network for 2014. Bernie was president of FoBR from 1999 -2001 and newsletter editor from 2002-2005, but achieved much more for the Friends group and the park. The citation of Bernie's achievements from the VEFN is copied below. Well done Bernie!

Colin Cook

### Citation

Bernie became a regular visitor to the Brisbane Ranges National Park in the 1990's and then a regular member of the FOBR in early 2000. Eventually Bernie's passion and enthusiasm saw him elected President from 1999 to 2001, and Newsletter Editor from 2002 to 2005. However his contribution to the group has been determined by more than the committee positions he has held. His regular communication with Park staff and his understanding of park maintenance requirements contributed to the formation of yearly activities program for the Friends. He actively encouraged the volunteers and Parks staff to discuss park priorities and successfully seek grants.

Bernie's newsletters became legendary for important events and contacts within the environmental network. His networking skills were always to the fore. He successfully liaised with the Wyndham Disability Group to hold a Festival and encouraged both PV staff and the FOBR to support the project. It was a perfect way for all to become aware of valuable information and contacts regarding park facilities for people of all abilities.

Perhaps one of Bernie's most diligent networking projects was during 2010 when the Lower Stony Creek Reservoir and surrounding catchment became a significant addition to the Brisbane ranges national Park. The transfer project had been languishing in Parks Victoria and Barwon Water for nearly ten years. Bernie contacted people, arranged meetings, wrote submissions and liaised with media to push - with gentle persistence - everyone in the right direction. The result was that nearly 1200 hectares of land came into the park.

His contribution to parks and conservation extended way beyond the FOBR. He was a key member of the Victorian Environment Friends Network from 1999 to 2009, but retained the task of the email distribution of the Friends Network Newsletter. He is a past Councillor and President of the Victorian national Parks Association. In this way he has made a major contribution to the conservation cause in Victoria.

Coupled with this, Bernie has made an outstanding contribution to the concept of volunteering in parks. His thoughts and ideas about the value of environmental conservation have always been matched by his value of volunteers successfully networking and sharing skills and experience. He made newcomers welcome with genuine interest and this led to genuine engagement. The very many volunteers who have been privileged to work with Bernie have been befriended, assisted, inspired and encouraged.

For all the great skills he has shown perhaps this last is the greatest.

The Victorian Environment Friends Network has great pride and pleasure in awarding Bernie the Best Friend Award in 2014.

## For your diary! Join us

**Sunday 8th February 2015**

Tidy up and potting up in the depot. Walk and track definition in the afternoon.

**Sunday March 15th**

Activity to be advised

**Your articles:** We would love to publish your stories of bushwalking and other activities in the *Brissies*.

Send in your contributions to [friends\\_br@yahoo.com.au](mailto:friends_br@yahoo.com.au)



Bernie receiving award  
Photo: Cyril Curtain.



Grass tree fauna: Australian Admiral butterflies, mystery critter and Blue-banded Bee  
Photos: Carolyn Edwards

## FoBR invited to present at conference

The Friends group was recently invited to give a presentation at the next Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens biennial conference, which will be held at the Geelong Conference Centre in Eastern Park, 30 April 2016. Presentations from the last conference can be read at <http://www.friendsbotanicgardens.org/events/events-archive/2014-afbg-national-conference-highlights.htm>.

The theme for 2016 is 'Geelong—Regional Relevance: botanic environments in a time of global warming'. In our region this includes forest, coastal vegetation, grasslands, wetlands, heathlands and salt marsh. The intention is to make relevant links between natural environments and botanic gardens at this critical time for our climate.

Cathy Powers has volunteered to make the presentation, but she will be ably supported by a team of enthusiastic contributors. As well as the presentation, we have to supply a paper for the conference proceedings. We have held an initial meeting to go over ideas for the presentation and paper, but nothing is firmly fixed yet. If you wish to help in the process, or even volunteer to do some field work to get data or photos, please contact myself or Cathy ([koolahcmp@gmail.com](mailto:koolahcmp@gmail.com)). We'll be holding another meeting on 26 February to go through ideas and themes.

Colin Cook

## Monitoring update

Things have been pretty quiet on the camera trap front, probably due to the extended dry spell we had, but there are some interesting sightings to report. Following the end of year BBQ, a few of us took a night walk down the Anakie Gorge with a small spotlight. While we didn't see many tree dwellers, we did spot large numbers of bats flying along the path. They were flying too quickly to enable any identification, but we reported the sightings to Trevor Pescott, as the Geelong Field Nats were planning a survey in the Brisbane Ranges soon after. Harp traps were set up in several locations to trap bats for identification, with healthy numbers of Little Forest Bats and one Lesser Long-Eared Bat being trapped and released. Also, while driving around the park, Trevor spotted a Red-bellied Black Snake on the Ballan Rd. Unfortunately, it had been hit by a car and didn't survive, but this is an unusual sighting for the park.



Red-bellied Black Snake  
Photo: Trevor Pescott

I've been playing around with ways to get better camera trap photos of our arboreal mammals. One species, the Sugar Glider, has eluded all my attempts to get a photo, even when I've set cameras up where they've been seen and heard. I decided to place cameras higher up in the tree and designed an arm that held the camera out from the tree, pointing back towards the trunk. I tested it at the front of our property where Sugar Gliders have been frequently sighted and finally got the photos I've been waiting for. I'm working on a different design as my first model required 3 hands to hang it from the tree easily (which is interesting when you're at the top of a ladder and only have two hands at your disposal). I should be able to start deploying this setup in the park soon, when I finalise my design and camouflage it a bit.

Colin Cook



Sugar Glider  
Photo: Colin Cook