

Dec 2015

In this issue

- Projects Update
- Last activity
- End of year celebration
- Thank you

Upcoming Events

End of year celebration  
Saturday 12 December, 5.30pm  
at Anakie Depot

No activity in January

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016 TBA

**Important Note:** if a Total Fire Ban is declared for the Central fire district, the FoBR activity will be called off.

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Brush-tailed Phascogale  
Photo by Trevor Pescott

## Projects Update

By Colin Cook

We now have 3 projects on the go. The significant species project is progressing nicely and two new projects have come up due to grant success in the Threatened Species Protection Initiative. One project submitted by FoBR and one by Trust For Nature were successful in obtaining funds.

The FoBR project is aimed at helping the Brush-tailed Phascogale. The Brush-tailed Phascogale, also known as the Tuan, is a nocturnal carnivorous marsupial about the size of a rat. It is a uniform deep grey on the top, with a dark stripe down its face, light grey to pale cream underneath with large naked ears and a conspicuous, black 'brushy' tail. The Brush-tailed Phascogale is now recognized as a threatened species at a State and National level.



Brush-tailed Phascogale captured by a motion sensitive camera  
Photo by Colin Cook

A predominantly carnivorous species, its diet consists largely of invertebrates which it finds by using its claws to tear away and search under tree bark. They are also known to eat small animals such as mice and birds and given the opportunity they will attack domestic poultry.

Phascogales usually only live for about 1 year, being of the “live fast, breed frenetically and die young” approach. Within their home range, they will use up to 30 tree hollows for shelter and breeding. Hollows for breeding and raising a family need to be large, but with a small entrance. Competition for these types of hollows is intense and a lack of suitable hollows can severely decrease the phascogale’s breeding success.

We were successful in obtaining a grant from the DELWP Threatened Species Protection Initiative to conduct habitat surveys and construct nest boxes for Brush-tailed Phascogales. Not only that, but we were selected to take part in a pilot program to try out crowdfunding on the Pozible website to raise more funds. If we meet our crowd funding target (\$10,000), DELWP will match the funds raised dollar for dollar up to an additional \$25,000.

We’re planning to use the funds from the grant and, if successful, from the Pozible campaign to construct and install nest boxes in the Brisbane Ranges National Park. We also intend to use the nest boxes to monitor the Brisbane Ranges population so we can ensure that this engaging animal won’t disappear from our well-loved patch of bush.

We will be working in collaboration with two schools: Newcomb Secondary College and Wyndham Central College, who already conduct environmental education activities in the park and are keen to get more involved. Wyndham and Newcomb colleges have adopted the Brisbane Ranges and have been conducting environmental activities for approximately 12 years and curriculum is currently being planned for next year, with nest box making high on the agenda.

Homes for Brush-tailed Phascogales Pozible campaign site

[www.pozible.com/tuannestboxes](http://www.pozible.com/tuannestboxes)

State Wide Integrated Flora and Fauna Teams

[http://www.swifft.net.au/cb\\_pages/brush-tailed\\_phascogale.php](http://www.swifft.net.au/cb_pages/brush-tailed_phascogale.php)

The effectiveness of providing nest boxes for Brush-tailed Phascogales

[http://bird.net.au/bird/index.php?title=SWIFFT\\_meeting\\_notes\\_2\\_February\\_2012#Long\\_term\\_nest\\_box\\_study\\_in\\_the\\_Bendigo\\_area](http://bird.net.au/bird/index.php?title=SWIFFT_meeting_notes_2_February_2012#Long_term_nest_box_study_in_the_Bendigo_area)

## Last activity

A few of us turned out at Marshalls Rd and delved into the bush, looking for boneseed. Although not many plants were found, some were quite large and took considerable effort to uproot. A fine destructive morning was spent.

## End of year celebration

Saturday 12 December, 5.30pm at Anakie Depot

Update meeting 5.30-6.30: What’s happening in the Brissies and how can we be involved?

Dinner from 6.30: pizzas supplied and cooked in the pizza oven, BYO salad or dessert to share. RSVP ASAP to Colin Cook, including any dietary requirements (5286 1252).

The Trust For Nature project, coordinated by Chris Lindorff, is aimed at protecting the Velvet Daisy Bush (Critical assessment and protection of Velvet Daisy-bush (*Olearia pannosa* subsp. *cardiophylla*)).

Velvet Daisy-bush exists in many small populations on both public and private land. This project will survey all currently known populations of Velvet Daisy-bush in Victoria (occurring across 4 broad population areas). Abundance, health and current threats will be identified. Herbivore exclusion will be undertaken in the most threatened populations using fences (rabbit and wallaby proof), coupled with rabbit and weed control. Importantly, research lead by ARI will be undertaken to monitor plant growth, flowering and seed set, before and after actions of pest control and herbivore exclusion.

Community engagement will increase awareness, involving groups such as the Friends of Brisbane Ranges in survey activities. Landholder liaison and partnership will foster enthusiasm for the protection of the species, with encouragement to enter in permanent conservation covenant agreements.

There are four main objectives:

1. To undertake a thorough assessment of currently known populations of Velvet Daisy-bush, surveying for population size, distribution, health, and threats;
2. Mitigate threats by undertaking high priority actions for populations of Velvet Daisy-bush in most need, using herbivore exclusion fences, rabbit control, and weed control;
3. Set-up of herbivore exclusion plots (x4) to assess herbivore impacts;
4. Community and individual landholder engagements through education and participation. In addition, encourage landholder commitment to permanent protection of their land through conservation covenants.



Velvet Daisy-bush  
Photo by Chris Clarke via NatureShare

## Thank You

I would just like to thank all of the FoBR committee members and volunteers who have contributed to a productive year for the Friends group. The Rangers who have passed on information, organised activities and turned up on the day are also due our gratitude and we hope to see more of you in the next year. Maybe up a tree installing a nest box?

Colin Cook