

September 1997

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

Celebration at the Mount

By Pat Coupar

Glasses in hand, the crowd of around 60 gathered in a semi-circle of reverence. Wind blasted the faces and whipped words from the lips of the speakers. The message, though, was clear - at long last Mount Lofty had become part of the Warrandyte State Park. With appropriately chosen 'Windy Peak' champagne made locally in the Yarra Valley, we toasted the victory. And what a victory it was.

After a brief congratulatory address by Wendy Smith, MLA for Silvan, Flora Anderson outlined the struggle to secure this critical block of land where eagles dare to fly. As she succinctly put it "It is a passing of the baton story in a relay race of concerned citizens".

The first and probably most important battle took place in the early 1970's when it was proposed to dam the river to form a reservoir at Yarra Brae. Thankfully this project never went ahead. The land that the Board of Works acquired for the project became surplus and was put up for auction. Once again action by concerned citizens was successful and the sale was stopped.

It was stated in the Warrandyte State Park Management Plan of 1990 that "In 1987 the government agreed to the transfer of the Mount Lofty area from the Board of Works". The idea was for the Department of Conservation and Environment (at the time) to swap a block of their land at Plenty in return for Mount Lofty. This seemingly simple solution never eventuated, at least as far as Mount Lofty was concerned.

Over the last few years a number of fences have been constructed at Mt Lofty to exclude rabbits and horses. Undoubtedly the most important of these, in light of the Heritage and Country Club development a stone's throw upstream, is the wetland fence.

Finally on March 18th 1996 a press release was issued declaring a \$100,000 funding boost for Mount

Lofty. But it took another year before the announcement came that Mount Lofty had, under the National Park's Amendment Bill, been officially incorporated into Warrandyte State Park.

However, the battle does not end here. The greatest of all challenges lies ahead as Ranger-in-Charge, Andrew Nixon, indicated in his speech. With the need to conserve flora and fauna, control pest plants and animals and provide recreational facilities for the public, available funds must be carefully juggled. It is an awesome task, but as always FOWSP will be on hand to offer whatever assistance we can.

For most of the afternoon the sun shone kindly, illuminating the golden-bloomed silver wattles that formed a perfect backdrop to the celebration. But as the crowds began to disperse, steely-grey storm clouds were billowing up the valley. Then as the last stragglers were departing lightening flashed. In slanting streaks, a sudden hail storm hit the hill and it was left to the forces of nature to have the last word.





Rangers Report

Andy Nixon has returned from a very pleasant long-service leave break, and is looking forward to the coming (financial) year at Warrandyte State Park. Many issues, particularly the development of Parks Victoria programs and the disaggregation of the park service from Natural Resources & Environment, are filling staff diaries. No doubt a highlight of the year to come is the inclusion of the Mt. Lofty block to WSP and the associated planning works.

Some issues/actions over the past month are :

- The Pound Bend house (Rod Safstrom's) will not be purchased by the government, due to lack of \$\$\$\$. This is likewise to be the case with the property abutting Mt. Lofty.
- Parks Victoria, Melbourne West region had a review day recently, looking at how the new organisation is doing. Pleasingly the 'number one' issue that staff agreed as of the highest priority requirements was **Environmental Management**.
- An audit of the WSP Management Plan has been completed. Tabled for FOWSP's comment.

Capital works funding for the 97/98 financial year is firming up. At this stage it looks to be:

\$60,000 for Jumping Ck, Pound Bend, Stane Brae and Gold Memorial up grades and prior works completion.

\$50,000 for implementation of the 'Risk Management' audit.

\$30,000+ for Mt. Lofty pre planning and site survey work.

Andy Nixon, is on this Parks Vic. steering committee for the Park's Centenary Year. Of interest to FOWSP may be the plans for including VNPA groups in Centenary Walks, 'Thankyou' days, Field Naturalists expositions, The Prom and Buffalo celebrations.

WSP Park Staff have no further objection to Manningham's proposed redevelopment of the Jumping Ck road bridge, on the basis of no change to agreements struck through the negotiation period. However, they will be closely monitoring the redevelopment as it proceeds.

Field works in the past month have included: One Tree Hill Keys mine filled and fenced; weed work - thistle, smilax, pines ringbarked; securing of the Mt Lofty wetland area at Homestead Rd, further rabbit/fencing works at the 25 acre paddock Yarra Brae.

The month of September is likely to see WSP with little field crew work due to staff leave and the temporary loss of one staff position.

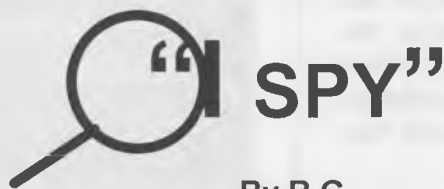
The integrated rabbit control program for WSP is all set to go with quite good funding support being offered by NRE Catchment and Agricultural Services including some \$\$\$\$ from the federally funded Rabbit calici-virus disease program. However, the Catch-22 is that we don't have a staff person to run this program yet. Hopefully, we shall be receiving a re-allocated staff person from elsewhere in the organisation. This will be our fifth staff person, whose major focus will be pest animal control!

A very successful Eltham Copper Butterfly Friends Group working bee was held on 10/8 - 12 people in attendance for the morning. Weed work mainly with some painting, track work and general tidy up. Next gathering - larvae count! Extra volunteers always welcome (and required).

Manningham Council and Parks Victoria had a joint planning meeting looking at how we can improve work on various environmental issues together for example Manningham's plan for Wittons Reserve will not be actioned until the Mt. Lofty plan is underway.

A great day at the Mt. Lofty celebration! Many thanks to all involved (Ron's ute will never be the same again).

Park budgets are still not quite finalised but Warrandyte is not doing too badly. Yarra Valley Parklands and Sugarloaf are having to take the brunt of any cuts. Good on them!



By B.G.

Our intrepid mystery reporter has become a roving reporter and is wending her/his way north to warmer climes. Please don't despair, a report is promised for next month.

Flora of Warrandyte Update

This month another 43 species have been added to the Flora of Warrandyte, making a total of 370 species that have now been completed. Amongst these latest additions are 11 orchids, including two species of Leek Orchid



(*Prasophyllum brevilabre* and *P. odoratum*) rediscovered in Warrandyte last year. As well, 10 of the 12 species of Greenhood (*Pterostylis*) are now complete.

The Flora of Warrandyte is a pictorial record of Warrandyte's indigenous flora. A whole A4 page (sometimes two) has been allocated to each species. There are colour photographs showing the plant in habitat, it's habit and a close up of the flower and sometimes the fruit or any other features that helps to identify the species.



Descriptions are confined to the type of plant ie. tree, shrub, grass, orchid, fern etc. height and flowering time. Distribution of each species within six areas of Warrandyte State Park and the local district are shown. Many plants are considered significant in the Melbourne region, references for this classification are given in brackets. In addition each species has been given a district status and abundance rating. See the following example:

Prasophyllum brevilabre Short-lip Leek-orchid

Orchidaceae

Orchid to 40cm Sept-Dec

Significant in the Melbourne region
(Beardsell, Cheal et al⁺, FoM⁺)

District status: endangered

District abundance: rare and localized

PB	BF	JC	YB	FH	ML	DISTRICT
				✓		PH

The two volume "Flora of Warrandyte" is available from the Warrandyte State Park office for short term loan. For further information ring David Van Bockel on 9844 2659 or Pat Coupar on 9844 1650.

Where Are They Now?

A number of plant species, mainly orchids, have disappeared in Warrandyte State Park over the last ten years. Or have they? Because most of these plants are small and cryptic, they may have been overlooked. I am hoping the unusual weather we have had over the last 18 months will cause some plants to re-appear this Spring. We have reliable records of when and where many of the species were last seen in Warrandyte, but I am not able to get around to all the sites in the time available.

If there are any FOWSP members interested in carrying out some Flora Research Survey work in the Warrandyte area, this is a great opportunity to do so.

Experience and botanical knowledge is not essential. While flora survey work does not necessarily produce the results desired, there is always some knowledge to be gained.

Of recent concern on Fourth Hill is evidence of damage to orchid tubers by White-winged Choughs. In some areas, where the birds have dramatically increased in numbers, orchid populations have been decimated. It is important that we monitor bird numbers at these sites in Warrandyte.

If you are interested in either of these projects please see David Van Bockel for further details. Any amount of time (eg. even several hours in total) would be appreciated. Ph: 9844 2659.

The Platypus

Green Wedge Seminar given by Geoff Williams and Melody Serena

Report by Sharon Mason

Melbourne's platypus have been the subject of some recent research. Nets were set up on various creeks with the aim of catching all platypus passing by. The figures of individual animals found in three creeks are as follows:

Creek	Males	Females	Juveniles
Mullum 1995-97	8	8	4
Anderson 1997	2	1	1
Diamond 1995-97	2	2	5

One individual was trapped in both the Mullum and Diamond Creeks.

After trapping, animals were examined and new animals received a microchip by injection for future identification. Some animals had a transmitter glued to their tail which stays on for about two months, falling off when the animal moults. The transmitter allows an operator with an antenna to find the whereabouts of individual animals. From this procedure the following useful information has been gained: Males have a larger home range (7.3 kms) than females (4.5 kms); animals use 4-12 burrows (individuals do not have exclusive rights to particular burrows); burrows are mainly located in banks with overhanging vegetation 1-3 metres above water. They are generally hidden amongst vegetation including blackberries (gradual removal and replacement with alternative native cover was suggested for this weedy species). The burrow chamber is located within 4 metres of the water.

Platypus showed no reluctance at passing under the bridge crossing the Mullum Ck at Warrandyte Rd or high voltage power lines. In the Mullum Ck animals were detected from its junction with the Yarra River to approximately 0.5 kms upstream of Warrandyte Rd, although animals seemed to prefer the upper section which contains riffles and holes.

At high flow times in the Mullum platypus move downstream to the Yarra.. It is thought that this is one reason why the animals are found only four kilometres up the creek as this is the distance which can be travelled in a day.

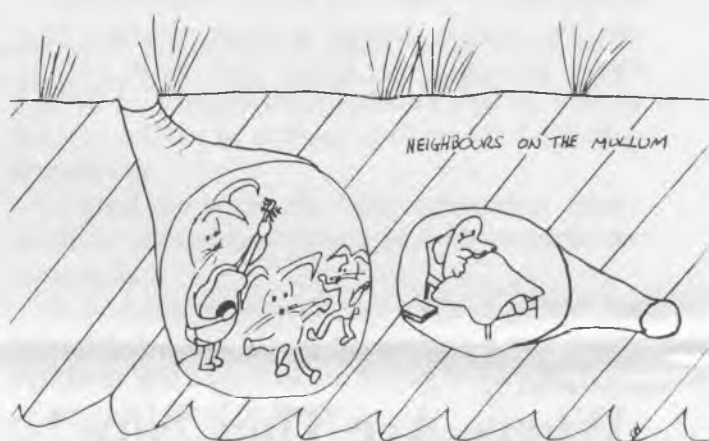
One in ten platypus trapped had litter such as fishing lines, six pack holders and elastic bands around their neck. These trapped individuals were still capable of functioning despite the litter, but undoubtedly there are other even more unfortunate victims which were not discovered.

The tail of the platypus is a storage organ for fat and an indicator of the health of the animal. Interestingly, females with young have worn tails, this is because they continually use their tails to plug the nest burrow.

Where willows are present there are generally less platypus - probably a result of lack of aquatic invertebrates, their main food, which prefer native vegetation. Platypus require one third of their body in food each night.

The platypus has two layers of fur which, at 800 strands per square millimetre, is thicker than that of a polar bear.

The facts just go on and on. It was a most informative evening and the multitude of questions which followed the talk was an indication of the immense interest in these remarkable animals.



Library Update

The FOWSP library is constantly being updated with new books, so please take advantage of this wonderful resource. Some of our newly catalogued books include:

- 'Attracting Frogs to Your Garden' - creating an ideal habitat for native frogs in your own backyard.
- 'A Field Guide to Frogs of Australia' - from Port Augusta to Fraser Island, including Tasmania.
- 'A Field Guide to the Orchids of NSW and Victoria' - reviewed in our July Newsletter
- 'Flora of Victoria Volume 3' - Dicotyledons, Winteraceae to Myrtaceae.

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 11TH Mount Lofty Wetland MORNING ACTIVITY

Meet on site at 10.00am

This will be the first activity at Mt Lofty since it became part of the State Park. We will inspect previous plantings and do some more enrichment plantings of rare wetland species.

Leader Flora Anderson. Meet at the end of Lower Homestead Rd, Wonga Park. (Melways ref. map 279 B4)

SEPTEMBER 18TH A Visit to the 100 Acres Reserve

Meet on site at 1.15 pm

This reserve in Park Orchards is a gem. At this time of the year the wildflowers will be stunning. It will be a chance to compare and contrast the vegetation with Warrandyte's bushland.

Leader Jane Pammer. Meet at the car park at Domeney Reserve, Knee's Rd, Park Orchards. (Melways ref. map 35 E9)

SEPTEMBER 25TH Frogland and Nursery Garden Maintenance MORNING ACTIVITY

Meet at the depot 10.00 am

The plants we put in around the outside of the old hardening off have thrived, just a little weeding needed. Frogland is also looking great - time to plant up around the new pond with some rare aquatics.

Leader Pat Coupar and Jenny Hoskin. Meet at the WSP depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 C10)

OCTOBER 2ND Black Flat Ivy Pull MORNING ACTIVITY

Meet on site at 10.00am

A couple more hours should be all that is needed to finish removing the isolated patch of ivy that we attacked a few months ago.

Leader Pat Coupar. Meet at the car park off Tills Drive, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 H11)

OCTOBER 9TH One Tree Hill Planting

Meet on site at 1.15 pm

There are several boxes of plants that desperately need to go in the ground. Once this is done Diane will lead us on a walk to see how the wildflowers are faring in this dry year.

Leader Diane Silveri. Meet at the Watson's Ck car park Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd. (Melways ref. map 272 F3)

OCTOBER 16TH Orchids and Other Wildflowers MORNING ACTIVITY

Meet at the depot to pool cars at 10.00am

We will be touring various areas including the Butterfly Reserves at Eltham and Ironbark Rd, Diamond Ck to discover the rich diversity of wildflowers in the close proximity to Warrandyte.

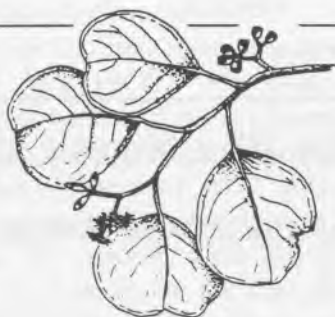
Leader Flora Anderson. Meet at the WSP depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 C10)

OCTOBER 23RD Beautification of Norman's Reserve

Meet on site at 1.15 pm

The car park at the end of Bradley's Lane needs our attention. The central area has been sprayed to kill most of the weeds. We shall be planting some specials 'pretty' plants into these areas.

Leader Joan MacMahon. Meet at the car park at the end of Bradleys Lane, North Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 B12)



Calendar of Sunday Events

SEPTEMBER 21ST Timber Reserve Treasures

Time:- 10:00 - 1:00 PM

A wildflower walk through the reserve to look for orchids, some of which will be flowering. Followed by an inspection of Pittosporum Gully Fence for some maintenance weeding. BBQ provided, with meat, bread and BBQ supplied, BYO salads and drinks.

Leader: Brian Phefley

Note: this is not the last Sunday in the month

OCTOBER 25TH - 26TH Spring Camp at Anglesea

It's the perfect time to see one of the best wildflower heathlands in the State. Come for the day or stay for two. Camp site yet to be decided.

Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series

Wildlife

4th September	Lindy Lumsden	Bats
2nd October	George Paras	Native Fish of the Yarra
6th November	Andrew Bennet	Wildlife Corridors
4th December	Linton Staples	Foxes

Held at 7.30pm on the first Thursday of every month at the Warrandyte Community Centre, Yarra St Warrandyte

Enquiries: Bill Mallinson 9840 9338

FOWSP Committee

Mike Coupar	9903 9567
Ron Taylor	9844 4285
Flora Anderson	9722 1776
Pat Coupar	9844 1650
Joan MacMahon	9844 3213
Anthony Owen	9844 1344
Cathy Willis	9844 1841

Contact person
Contact person
Public Officer

Newsletter editor
Newsletter editor
Treasurer

Secretary

Jenny Hoskin	9808 9231
Alistair Traill	9722 1518

Wildlife Rescue

Julie Pryor	9722 1117
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Market

Betty Oke	9844 3763
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Park Office 9844 2659

Victoria's National Parks The Next Century

Date: Friday 24th October (evening) and Saturday 25th (9.00am - 5.00pm)

Place: The University of Melbourne

For details ring 9816 9111



It has been a tragic couple of months on the roads for our native wildlife. And there are no prizes for

guessing which road features every time. Six animals that Julie knows about - there may have been more - have been hit by cars on Jumping Creek Road over the last eight weeks. Five of these were Eastern Grey Kangaroos, four of which were either killed outright or so seriously injured that they had to be put down, the other animal was a wombat which was found dead.

One of the roos was found lying in the middle of the road - a potential disaster for an even more serious accident. There are many sharp bends and tight corners along this road which cuts through a busy wildlife corridor across two sections of the Warrandyte State Park. Widening of the road and realigning the bridge will only increase native

animal fatalities as traffic will move even faster.

Other rescue news include a Black Duck seen at Croydon Hills with a dart sticking out of its back. It was not able to be captured so its fate is unknown. A Butcher Bird found at Wonga Park which died on arrival and a Brushtail Possum hit by a car in Yarra Road which also died. Two Ringtail Possums were passed on to Julie by a Ringwood North vet. One had been attacked by a cat, but appeared to be uninjured and will be released soon. The other is a baby found abandoned, and guessed to be about 3 -4 months old, this one will probably be cared for in the wildlife shelter until the end of summer.

Finally, new foster carer Fowspian Trish Millington, has received her first animal - a Tawny Frogmouth - which is unable to fly. It is too early to determine its future, but it will be taken to a large private aviary in Warrandyte.

Let's hope that in two months time the rescue news is a little brighter.

Wildlife Seminar

Date: Thursday September 25th, 7.00 to 10.00pm

Place: Currawong Bush Park, Reynolds Rd., Warrandyte (Melway ref. map 34 H6)

Speaker: Pat Fricker

Bookings essential (no charge) - Phone Donna Stoddart (9840 9307)

Good News

by Joan MacMahon

Are you interested in helping to save some of our most endangered birds from extinction? A great opportunity awaits.

Birds Australia (formerly the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union), has committed itself to a wonderful, on-ground scheme, which will provide a safe home for some of Australia's rarest birds.

It's best if I quote directly from their magazine *Wingspan* (Vol.7 No.2 June 1997): "The chance discovery of six globally threatened birds at Gluepot Station in South Australia, under imminent threat of controlled burning, has galvanised the entire organisation. In an unprecedented move, Birds Australia has decided to commit \$350,000 to purchase the property. To protect for all time the colonies of Black-eared Miners, Malleefowl and others, we will raise the funds necessary

to establish the new Birds Australia Murray Mallee Reserve. You can play a vital part in creating this special place for birds and bird-loving Australians."

The other threatened birds are Red-lored Whistler, Scarlet-chested Parrot, Regent Parrot and Striated Grasswren.

At 51,000 ha (126,700 acres), the new Reserve measures c.40x12 km. This is a substantial area and is slightly larger, for example, than Victoria's famous Wilson's Promontory National Park (49,000ha). Gluepot Station was established as a pastoral lease over a hundred years ago. It is still a pastoral lease with a renewable 42-year lease. Plans include conducting a detailed flora and fauna survey and provision of camping facilities.

If you would like to be part of this delightful project, contact Birds Australia at;

415 Riversdale Rd.,
Hawthorn East
3123

Ph: 9882 2622; Fax: 9882 2677;
e-mail: raou@raou.com.au

Yarra Catchment Community Workshop

Port Phillip Catchment and Land Protection Regional Vegetation Plan

By Jenny Hoskin

Each Catchment and Land Protection Board in Victoria is undertaking the preparation of Regional Vegetation Plans. The main objective of the plans produced by each Board are to 'provide a regional framework' for interpretation of Native Vegetation Retention Controls (NVR) and assessment of clearing applications by Council and Parks Victoria staff.

The workshop for the Yarra Catchment area was held in late July at the Parks Victoria office in Box Hill. As an interested member of FOWSP, I attended this workshop.

Basically the aim of this workshop was to provide an open forum for interested community groups and individuals who live in the Yarra Catchment area. The forum was designed for individuals to express their opinions and to contribute their ideas on what guidelines could be implemented for officers responsible for assessment of applications to clear native vegetation.

Presenting this workshop were the following Representatives:

Bill Thomas. *Executive Officer, Port Phillip Catchment and Land Protection Board.*

Caroline Douglas. *Statewide Manager, Parks Victoria, Vegetation Plan Project.*

Catherine Costello. *Biosis Research Pty. Ltd.*

Jessica Wilson. *Biosis Research Pty. Ltd.*

Carri Tiffany. *Communication Consultant,* who facilitated the Group Discussion

The discussion was lively and questions were raised about the appropriateness of this plan. Some of these comments are summarised below:

- Why implement guidelines to clear land, when we should be implementing structures to retain areas of vegetation that are left?
- Why identify certain areas of significance, when all is significant?
- What penalties are in force when individuals clear larger areas than allocated by permit? Are these penalties enforced?
- Is vegetated land less significant if it is regarded as degraded, as most vegetation has some form of degradation?

One suggestion consisted of more accountability of land owners to produce management plans before clearing takes place. There was an overriding concern, by the majority of guests, for areas not nominated to be easily cleared with the incorporation of this plan. Whether this was a successful discussion would depend on your individual viewpoint. There appeared to be lots of frustration by guests who had attended previous workshops of this nature and who had seen the end result as very distant from the suggestions made. Was this just another token gesture by the powers that be? Appearing to be interested and concerned about individuals opinions and suggestions when the final product does little to address their concerns?

The Yarra Catchment area comes under the umbrella of the Port Phillip Catchment. Biosis Research Pty. Ltd. has been contracted by the Port Phillip Catchment and Land Protection Board to produce the vegetation plan for the Port Phillip Board area.

Their goals are:

1. To identify areas of the Region that should retain native vegetation.
2. To provide guidelines to assist the decision making process.

If anyone is interested in seeing the NVR it will be displayed in the Folly. A copy of the Draft, will apparently be available for public consultation in late September for a two month exhibition phase. This Draft for the Vegetation Plan Project, when received, will also be displayed in the Folly.

Preliminary notice - mark it in your diary **SPRING CAMP AT ANGLESEA** (Weekend of October 25/26)

Join us while we explore the heathlands and forests of the Anglesea area.

We've been inspired to visit this neck of the woods since our 'not so new' ranger David Farrar expressed his great delight at the time he spent working down there.

We'll be staying at the Anglesea Camping Ground where there are comfortable cabins as well as camping facilities.

Worth Repeating

Victoria ranked last for saving wildlife

By Tim Winkler Environment reporter

The Victorian and Western Australian governments performed worse than the others in protecting the environment in 1996, the World Wide Fund for Nature said yesterday.

The WWF's annual report card on government environmental performance rated the efforts of Victoria and Western Australia as a grade of D on a scale of A to F. Victoria received a C in 1995.

While no government scored an A, the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments were awarded Bs.

The fund's chief executive officer, Dr David Butcher, said the report cards had been completed since 1993, when all governments agreed to protect a comprehensive range of reserves, representing a wide diversity of ecosystems.

"In 1993 Victoria was poised to easily achieve the target, but in the past four years very little has been achieved and things are actually going backwards," he said.

Victoria had failed to involve Aboriginal people in management, had created no new parks in 1996, had failed to develop management plans for many areas, and still allowed mining and logging to destroy valuable fragments of habitat, Dr Butcher said.

In particular, box-ironbark woodlands were threatened by continued logging and mining, red gum forests along the Murray were still being

exploited for wood, and moves to protect a few marine areas had been stalled.

While south eastern Australia had grown rich from exploiting the nation's two million hectares of grassland that existed before white settlement, only 10,000 hectares were now left mostly in wasteland areas in rail reserves or graveyards, Dr Butcher said. The Government was doing little to protect the remaining fragments.

The Victorian National Parks Association director, Mr Doug Humann, supported the fund's criticisms and said the abolition of the Land Conservation Council last month had stalled further development of park reserve systems.

Victoria had also broken its promise to complete management plans for all national parks by June 1997, he said.

A Government spokesman said Victoria was moving swiftly to achieve the 2000 reserve system target and significant grassland acquisitions were being negotiated at Terrick Terrick and Craigieburn.

The fund had failed to acknowledge Victoria's move to recognise the contribution of habitat on private land to the reserve system and the additional reserves to be created as a result of the February Regional Forest Agreement.

REPORT CARD

Government	Score
Commonwealth	B
NSW	B
NT	C+
ACT	C+
QLD	C+
TAS	C+
SA	D+
WA	D
VIC	D

Source: *The Age* July 18th 1997

Sunday Family Activity

Timber Reserve Treasures

DATE: September 21st

Time:- 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Ranger Brian Phefley will lead a wildflower walk through Timber Reserve to look for orchids, some of which will be flowering. This will be followed by an inspection of Pittosporum Gully Fence for some maintenance weeding.



BBQ provided, with meat, bread and BBQ supplied, BYO salads and drinks.

Note: this is not the last Sunday in the month



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The Mount Lofty Celebration



"For most of the afternoon the sun shone kindly, illuminating the golden-bloomed silver wattles that formed a perfect backdrop to the celebration."