

December 1997

# Friends of Warrandyte State Park



## Newsletter

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

### Wins, Losses and Compromises

By Cathy Willis and Pat Coupar

It is twelve months since the sudden abolition of the National Parks Service, just before Christmas last year. The creation of Parks Victoria has meant new management boundaries, different staff and a new, unimaginative logo. But, for the most part, the change has had little effect on the 'Friends of Warrandyte State Park'.

In some ways 1997 has been a rather turbulent year for us with many battles to be fought which resulted in wins, losses and compromises. First there was the threat of increasing commercialisation of our Park which came to our attention with the contracting out of summer interpretation programs in many Victorian Parks. The Wilson's Promontory tourist development debacle followed and led to the formation of Hands Off Our Parks (HOOP). Our group offered support and joined a rally of over 100 environment groups in February. The threat has not gone away and we remain a member of HOOP.

As a result of the proposed Jumping Creek Road and bridge re-alignment several of our members joined a committee to voice concern over the plans and to ensure that disturbance, due to the reconstruction, would be kept to a minimum. The plans are still being finalised, but will not be quite as devastating as we originally thought.

It appeared, in April, that the Warrandyte State Park depot at Pound Bend might close with possible dire consequences for the Park and the 'Friends'. Thanks to Phil Honeywood a meeting was set up with management MP and fortunately the threat was averted.

At about this time letters were sent to politicians protesting against the abolition of the Land Conservation Council (LCC) and advocating the release

of its final recommendations on marine and coastal areas. The Environment Conservation Council, which replaced the LCC, appears to have little autonomy and this is a great loss for conservation in Victoria.

The Anti Ring Road Organisation (ARRO) held a meeting at Monsalvat in Eltham at the end of April. FOWSP wrote to Manningham and Nillumbik endorsing the resolutions passed by that meeting. Later in the year we became a group member of ARRO.

July saw the beginning of the first series of Green Wedge Seminars jointly organised by Manningham City Council, FOWSP and Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA). The well-attended talks have been very successful and look set to continue next year.

August was a high point of the year. Over 70 people celebrated "the safeguarding of Mt. Lofty" with a champagne barbeque lunch on site. Scotchman's Hill also officially became part of Warrandyte State Park with the passing of the National Park's Amendment Bill through parliament.

The year ended on another high with the Victorian National Parks Association holding its annual picnic at Warrandyte on Sunday the 23rd of November. The day was a great success with almost 100 people spread out over the grass around the Folly enjoying the spring sunshine. The well-organised day included walks led by our members around the 'coupe', 'frogland' and the nursery in the morning and a leisurely stroll along the river to Pound Bend tunnel in the afternoon.

As the end of the year approaches we would like to thank all members of FOWSP for their ongoing support and we wish you all a very happy Christmas and a trouble-free new year.



# Two Years On

By Cathy Willis

So how does FOWSP actually run? I think we all privately wonder this ourselves at times! For two years now we have been operating as a co-operative style committee. We changed the constitution to this end last year. We do still have office bearers, but no single co-ordinator or president. This style of committee helps spread the load, and ensures everyone has an equal say. Monthly meetings mean that we all keep in touch, both with each other and with what is happening. Inevitably people become over committed and this year we are losing two members, but gaining at least one.

Thursday and Sunday programs take a lot of planning. Some activities are very successful and others fall a little flat. The nursery continues to produce quality revegetation stock, but attendances fluctuate. There has been some confusion about activities away from the nursery on Thursday

mornings. For these reasons, we sent all members a questionnaire last month to try to tailor our plans to what members want and when. We hope for a good response.

Pat Coupar and David Van Bockel continue work on Flora of Warrandyte while Pat and Joan MacMahon keep on getting out an excellent newsletter every month. Flora Anderson regularly attends conferences and meetings to keep us informed and put our point of view.

Many members are involved in running the market stall and helping out at the festival, while others distribute our book 'Discover Warrandyte' to local shops. Some members attend seminars and field trips and keep up contacts with other groups, some are involved in planning the Green Wedge Seminars, while still others organise boxes of plants for various groups and individuals, fold and post the newsletter, and so on.

In other words FOWSP continues as a diverse and co-operative group with input from many people who work hard to achieve our aims.



## Around the State

### The 'Prom'

By B.G

**Y**our roving reporter has been ensconced at Wilson's Promontory National Park for 19 cold, hot, windy and calm days.

Did you know that Parks Victoria has three Education Officers seconded from the Department of Education? One at Wilson's Prom, one at the Grampians (both on three year contracts) and one at the Dandenong Ranges on a one year contract. All operate under the 'Teacher Release Industry Program'.

Sometime in the future I would like to report on the commendable program I saw run by Graeme Baxter during schools camp time. It was heartening to see young people from schools weeding out forget-me-nots as part of a varied 'Prom' activity.

With 20 new cabins (\$105 minimum a night), 12 additional motor huts, a new group lodge and a reduction of 50 campsites, it is going to be harder

for Victorian families to experience the Prom. In addition the 'season' has been brought back to November the 1st with charges of \$14.50 per camp site per night.

One welcome proposal (I think) is to provide several wet-weather shelters and camp kitchens to improve camper comfort. (For full coverage of proposals look on the Folly noticeboard in mid-December).

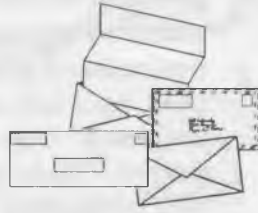
I heard a little Blue Wren's song about the new Tidal River Hotel which, it sang, was not as much on the backburner as we are led to believe. Would the painted theme for the Hotel foyer be a tidal wave of avarice capped with cupidity?

The planned burn around Tidal Overlook seems to have returned the area to its heathland ecology. On the north-east side hundreds of grass trees have flower stalks metres high with seed already setting. I recall, many years ago, botanist David Cameron lecturing at the Prom saying that a good burn was sometimes necessary. Seems so.

A new track is almost completed from the Tidal River bridge to the Lilly Pilly entrance area. This ends my 1997 report from the Prom.

## Letters to the Editor

I have to take issue with my friend Mike Coupar. In the last newsletter he told us we should be wary of nosy FOWSPians who ask more than the standard, "how are you?"



Mike was referring to the story on secret files in "The Age" a couple of months ago. The news that undercover police agents had infiltrated community groups for the purpose of spying was so preposterous I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. While life-threatening crimes take place around us (drugs and dangerous driving to name a couple) police put resources into scrutinising community-minded activists, most of whom wouldn't hurt a fly.

But the news wasn't all bad. Some undercover agents built a beautiful set of wooden shelves for the Friends of the Earth office in Collingwood. Friends

of the Earth were so grateful they bought the undercover agents a new blade for their power saw.

It is probably wise to be discreet about some information regarding the various organisations we belong to. Membership details and bank balances are best discussed inside the committee rather than in front of strangers.

But it worries me that the news about the police files might turn us paranoid and suspicious. Let's not go down that path, we have too much to lose. Let's not keep our mouths shut. Let's continue to trust each other and act friendly the way we always have done. Who knows, we might even get ourselves some new shelves!

**Fia Clendinnen**

**Good on you Fia. Thanks for drawing my attention to a possible side effect of my article. As you know the last paragraph was entirely tongue-in-cheek - see B.G's reply in this month's "I Spy".**

**Mike Coupar**

## Kinglake Contrasts

**By Pat Coupar**

**T**he weather for our day trip to Kinglake could not have been better - brilliant blue sky and a temperature around the mid-twenties. We were met at the Jehosaphat Gully car park by ranger Stephen Anderson (ex-Warrandyte State Park), whom we still think of as one of our own.

At an elevation of 500 metres the air was crystal clear. Steve gave us a brief introduction and overview of the 23,000 hectare National Park - a recent inclusion of which is the Wallaby Creek catchment. This area apparently contains stands of Mountain Ash that were not burnt in the 1939 fires and are in fact dying of old age - a very rare occurrence in Victoria.

We heard about David Attenborough's visit to film the lyrebirds for a sequence hopefully to be included in an episode entitled 'The Eloquent

Communicators' in his forthcoming 'Life of Birds'.

Then it was time for a walk. There were 19 of us altogether strung out along the track that descended into the gully. We saw a forest quite different to any of our Warrandyte plant communities. Mountain Grey Gum dominated the upperstory with just the occasional Mountain Ash, the middlestory was full of flowering Musk Daisy-bush and Austral Mulberry, and at our feet an abundance of ferns.

After lunch Steve took us to a total contrast - dry skeletal soils sustaining a more familiar Warrandyte-type bushland. Within a short distance we found three different species of orchid in flower (Leek, Sun and Bronze Caladenia). However, we were particularly envious of the stunning Blue Dampiera, a plant which does not occur in our area.

Steve and the three members of the 'Friends of Kinglake' who also came along were great hosts and I feel sure that this will not be our last visit to this fascinating National Park. After all we are practically neighbours.



## Rangers Report

David Farrar reporting:

One of the main priorities for us as a team at Warrandyte State Park is to be ready and capable to combat any fire that may eventuate in the area. My role is to make sure all equipment and staff are prepared for a fire and to carry out sufficient work for the prevention and suppression of fire within the Warrandyte Parks Management Area.

I will be working on fuel reduction burn planning which is part of a 5 year plan. Fuel reduction burns will be carried out when weather permits and our first priority is Hotchkins Ridge reserve in Croydon. In Warrandyte, weather permitting, we hope to carry out a few small strategic burns near residences.

Two project firefighters (PFF) started on November the 10th and they will be doing fire prevention works throughout the area. Another four PFF's will join us in December.

As part of my role in fauna management in the Warrandyte State Park and Reserves, I will be delving into the files on kangaroos and koalas to look at 'Friends' group surveys and past history. I will be looking at population densities and the current health of the two species as well as their numbers to ascertain if Warrandyte State Park has a population problem, or if it could be heading down a path to a problem. The issue of koala and kangaroo management in Victorian Parks is a State issue and is part of Parks Victoria's Corporate Directions 1997/98.

**David Van Bockel** is working on supervising weed control efforts in the Park and other reserves including:

- eradication of St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) from the Park.
- control of thistles in targeted locations in the Park.

- control of blackberries across most of the Park.
- control of woody weeds from targeted locations in the Park and reserves.
- eradication of all weed species (except Hair Grass (*Aira* spp.) and other insignificant weeds) from designated 'hot spots' across the Park and reserves. These 'hot spots' are mainly orchid-rich sites or locations where a number of significant species occur.

Kate Fletcher (a student just finishing her 4th year of a science degree) has finished mapping the main weeds at Black Flat, in preparation for their control.

The Warrandyte Land Managers Group is continuing to meet and coordinate common land management works across the councils, Melbourne Water, NRE and the Park in the local area. The main focus is noxious weeds, rabbits and education.

The monitoring of selected significant plant species is continuing, some species are now into their 3rd and 4th year of results and a picture is starting to form, however, it is proving difficult to interpret the results when there are many variables to consider. The solid base-line of data that is now building up will prove its value in time.

Hand pollination of Wine-lipped Spider-orchid (*Caladenia lindleyana*) and Bearded Greenhood (*Pterostylis plumosa*) continued this year, in an attempt to encourage recruitment (seed set).

**Glen Jameson** is working at the Park for three days a week for the next three months - principally to spend the 'Rabbit Busters' money. He will look at the long-term problem of rabbits in the Park and follow up Paul Hay's work at Yarra Brae as well as collecting meaningful data on rabbit numbers and determining the effectiveness of our control program in the long-term. Glen will also look at following up other works such as revegetation.

**Editor's Note:** The fuel reduction burn at Hotchkins Ridge was carried out on Wednesday December 3rd.

### Georgie's Memorial

Georgie Waterman (Saunders) delighted in life and her career as an interpreter of the natural world. She did the interpretive work for Whipstick Gully, as well as numerous projects in Victoria and interstate. She was an inspiration to all those Fowspians who knew her. Sadly, she died just over a year ago, in the prime of her life. Ron Taylor has designed and made a truly appropriate memorial to her - a bench seat of Yellow Stringybark. Positioned on our dam wall, such that the view is of Frogland and The Folly and their enveloping eucalypts, it's a peaceful place for rest and contemplation.





by B.G

### ***Oryctolagus cuniculus***

Glen Jameson is at Warrandyte State Park for three months (part-time) as Ranger-in-Charge of rabbits.

### ***Cubs in the Park***

Peter Deane (Assistant Cub/Scout Leader, 7th Ringwood, Maroondah District) informs me that this year, five groups of Cubs have been on 12 kilometre walks through the Park; covering Black Flat, The Nature Trail, Timber Reserve, Geraghty's Mine, Gold Memorial, Fourth Hill, Whipstick Gully, The Victory Mine and the Bence Track.

Peter, who has organised and led these hikes, regards the Park as a highly valued asset, because of its natural state, and its closeness and easy access for local groups.

### ***Stephen Studies***

Steven Anderson (ex W.S.P.), now Ranger at Kinglake National Park, is presently studying for an Associate Diploma of Applied Science through Charles Sturt University.

### ***Richtarik Returns***

Anna Richtarik started early November at the Park as one of our Summer Fire-Crew. Anna is a Community Fire-Guard Facilitator for the Research area.

### ***'Friends' Information***

A brochure is being prepared on the 'Friends' activities. It is hoped it will be available at locations such as picnic areas, car-parks, estate agents etc.

### ***Copper Caterpillars***

The annual larval count of the Eltham Copper Butterfly was recorded by Evan Schmidt (Museum Victoria) and carried out by in excess of twenty helpers from September to November this year.

A record count (under present day conditions) was the result; Pauline Toner Reserve 117

Western Reserve 222

Eastern Reserve 71

### ***The Last Cry***

Mick Woiward has researched a number of relevant works and sources and has written a book on what life was really like in the Yarra Valley.

'The Last Cry' is a book which allows a Wurundjeri elder to "--- see through the eyes of a white man" and "--- allows a white man to see through the eyes of a black man too." It is "A social history about --- people whose cultures met head on."

### ***November Names***

'Friends' market stall volunteers for November were Garry McKelvie, Cass Roadknight and Sally and Alan George. Several enquiries for information were by people who had just shifted into the Warrandyte area.

### ***'How are You'***

In response to Mike Coupar's "Fowsp Files" last month I have to point out that I was weaned on John Buchan's "37 (or 39) Steps", nurtured on Nancy Wake's exploits, aured by "The Whistler", intrigued by "the Third Man" and fascinated by Peter Wright's "Spycatcher". These are my only links with 'undercover work'.

I do have one blemish! That was when, like many others, I was peacefully led away by uniformed police, whilst attending the on-site protest at the (policy-driven) demolition of a dwelling used as housing for Warrandyte State Park Rangers.

But I would love to see an undercover police operation investigate and publicise the activities of those covert, commercial 'carpetbaggers' with influence on those with power, whose anti-environmental philosophy seems to be;

- destroy it if it's old
- sell it off if it's doing well
- cut it down if it stands still
- clear and develop it if it's on the ground
- call it 'green' if it opposes you

## **A Reminder**

Don't forget to fill in your FOWSP questionnaire as the committee does need input from members so that the Thursday and Sunday programs for 1998 can be planned accordingly. More than one member per family can fill in a form. More questionnaires can be obtained from the market stall or the Folly.



# Calendar of Sunday Events

There will be no FOWSP Sunday Family Activities for December or January.

## FEBRUARY 22ND Willow Attack

It's time to continue our attack on the willows again. Come prepared to get wet. Bring mattocks for digging out the yellow iris.

Any suggestions for the end of month Family Days for 1998 will be gladly received

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## FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

There will be no organized Thursday program during December and January. However, propagation mornings will continue each week from 10.00am onwards and there is always plenty to do in 'Frogland' and 'The Coupe' - the weeds don't take a holiday.

If enough people are interested impromptu walks may be arranged at lunch for an afternoon activity.

Any suggestions for Thursday morning or afternoon activities for 1998 will be gladly received

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### 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/Membership Sec.  
Secretary

Janie Vagg  
Alistair Traill 9722 1518  
Alison Thom 9844 3527

### Wildlife Rescue

Julie Pryor 9722 1117

### Market

Betty Oke 9844 3763

Park Office 9844 2659

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*The Committee would like to wish  
all FOWSP members a very merry  
Christmas and a Happy New Year*



# Wildlife Corridors

A Green Wedge Seminar talk by  
Andrew Bennett

Report By Pat Coupar

The high standard of these talks was maintained by Andrew Bennett, a lecturer in wildlife ecology at Deakin University, who spoke on wildlife corridors. He actually preferred to use terms like 'connectivity' and 'linkage' which were sprinkled freely through his talk. Although much of Andrew's research has been done in Western Victoria, the results are relevant to all areas of Victoria where bushland has become fragmented.

The fact is that 60% of tree cover in Victoria has been lost and the process is ongoing with a reduction in size of already fragmented areas leading to increased isolation and depletion of native fauna. Small blocks contain only common species, larger blocks may contain rare species.

So what can be done? Andrew suggested the following: retain and expand remaining blocks; maximise the quality of what remains by fencing and control of pest plants and animals; manage the surrounding areas and maintain connectivity along roadsides and stream banks.



Fragmented areas of bushland are extremely vulnerable to fire and entire populations can be wiped out this way. Providing

'stepping stones' of native vegetation is important. Some animals like kangaroos move well across open farmland, others like antechinus do not. Squirrel Gliders and Tuans can survive quite well despite cleared agricultural paddocks, however, they must have a linear network of trees for habitat along a road or creek. Sometimes the provision of artificial corridors, such as a tunnel or underpass, may be necessary to assist the movement of animals and for dispersal of young.

Many factors must be considered when managing wildlife corridors. For a start there is the status of the land, management resources, support from the local community and above all monitoring. Andrew was asked if there was a set width for a wildlife corridor, his answer "as wide as possible". At the end of the talk we were left with the feeling that all is not lost. Yet.

## *The smell of petrol in the morning*

*I love a concrete country  
A land of traffic lanes,  
Of clear-felled asphalt valleys,  
Of creeks in barrel drains;  
I love her giant noise walls,  
I love each ramp I see,  
Her benzene and her carbons,  
The wide tarmac for me!*

*So Run-RideORoll the eastern  
This Sunday ten till three,  
And celebrate the Koornong,  
As just a memory;  
They raze the Mullum Mullum  
And cover it with tar,  
Rejoice in nature vanished,  
The triumph of the car.*

**Merideth Sherlock  
Diamond Creek**

*Source: The Age 3/12/97*

## Weather Update

According to the weather bureau, the total spring rainfall over eastern Australia was generally close to normal. This was unusual for an El Nino event. However, historical precedent indicates that the influence of El Nino would persist at least until mid-summer. The timing of the breakdown of the El Nino influence is uncertain, with relieving rains most likely in late summer or early autumn.

# Antechinus Swamp

## Where is it and what's in it?

By Joan MacMahon

If you head down Bradleys Lane in North Warrandyte and park at the Norman Reserve carpark (Melway 23 C12) you'll not be many metres away from this well kept secret. As you enter the reserve it's on your left, well-hidden behind a dense screen of Burgan and Honeysuckle, and one of Warrandyte's few examples of Blady Grass.

As to the name, it originated in 1992, (the 'good old days') when Park staff had a bit of time to do research. Traps were set over several nights in April and May by Ranger Steven Anderson and Parkcare Officer Fay Valcanis. To everyone's delight there were two trappings of a male Brown Antechinus (*Antechinus stuartii*) amongst sedges at the swamp edge. (Whether there was one or two individuals is impossible to say.) These little marsupial carnivores are mainly nocturnal. They look like a big, long-nosed, large-eared mouse and feed on invertebrates such as beetles, spiders and cockroaches. From a human perspective mating is a very strange phenomenon. Apparently in southern Australia it occurs in late Winter, in August, when the males expend enormous amounts of energy searching for and mating (for at least six hours at a time) with one or more females. All the males are soon dead from stress-induced illness! This leaves the mother to care for her often quite large family of up to ten offspring.

About two years ago I was invited to lunch by the neighbour who lives two doors from the swamp. The day was beautifully fine so we were sitting on the rear deck chatting quietly when we noticed a large 'mouse' foraging under some shrubs about two metres from our table. Digging in the soft, leaf-covered soil it didn't notice our presence and so we were able to watch it feeding for about ten minutes. It was a delightful experience. The next time I visited the swamp the only ground-dweller I saw was a pussy-cat slinking through the sedges. Imagine my thoughts.

I've checked with my neighbour and she's had no further sightings. Let's hope the antechinus we saw was not the last one at Antechinus Swamp.

Over recent years plant surveys, plantings and a small amount of weeding have been done by the Friends, in conjunction with the (now defunct) Green Task Force. Much more remains to be done. It would be great to remove the Honeysuckle and the Pittosporum which take up large amounts of space and

make the area surrounding the swamp unnaturally dark.

Since the swamp receives some run-off from the nearby properties, including our own, I thought it would be useful to somehow check the water quality. So I asked one of our young members (an 11 year old) with an interest in freshwater ecology to do the following survey.

## "Stream Habitat and Pollution Index for Antechinus Swamp

by Rosalyn Moore

Sampling date: 8.7.97

Average depth of water: 10cm

Macro Invertebrates are small (but not microscopic) animals without back bones and they are used to find out how polluted rivers and creeks etc are because different types of Macro Invertebrates can tolerate a different amount of pollution. Macro Invertebrates also prefer cool water which is provided by the shade of Stream Habitat.

At the Antechinus Swamp I used a pool net to collect a sweep sample of Macro Invertebrates.

This is what I found:

- about 100 caddis fly larvae
- 51+ mites
- 1 amphipod (or scud)
- 3 water skimmers
- 14 mosquito larvae
- 4 unidentified larvae
- ~ 25 water fleas



Scud or side-swimmer

This means that the Macro Invertebrate rating (or pollution index) is fair.

I also looked at stream habitat while I was at Antechinus Swamp.

Here are the stream habitat ratings I made:

- Bank Vegetation 10/10
- Verge Vegetation 10/10



Water mite

- In stream cover 8/10

- Erosion and stability 5/5

- Pools, Riffles & bends 3/5

Overall, the score for S.H. is 36/40 and the rating is excellent.

It would be interesting to repeat this survey at different times when the swamp had more or less water in it."

A good idea Rosalyn. Let's hope for exceptionally heavy autumn rains. We'll be after you and your pool net for a comparative survey.





## Book Review

### Earth First by Jeni Kendell and Eddie Buirids

Review by Ray Clarke

"The arms of a mother swept around one of the loggers. You are such a handsome young man how can you possibly do this type of work?"

This story about Cecilia, aged seventy, who had struggled for hours through wet and rough Tasmanian forest to reach a dam work site, is one of the many stories of the incredible tenacity of conservationists that is told in "Earth First - the struggle to save Australia's rainforest."

The book describes three hard fought campaigns: The New South Wales rainforest; the Franklin River dam and the Daintree to

Bloomfield road. The first two were successful, and the last, although unable to stop the appalling road hacked through the Daintree rainforest, did much to stimulate public opinion.

The people about whom the book was written were often regarded as hippies, drop-outs, dole bludgers or rent-a-crowd. However, we find they were actually from every walk of life, and for their conviction, were willing to endure great discomfort, dangers and often arrest by the police.

The book includes five wonderful photographs of the Tasmanian rainforest by Peter Dombrovkis the man whose widely published "Rock Island Bend" did much to stop the Franklin dam. Dombrovkis died last year while walking alone in his beloved Tasmanian South West. This book is now in the FOWSP library and the note on the fly leaf by "Joy" is worth a chuckle.



VNPA Director Amanda Martin speaking at the VNPA Annual Picnic at Warrandyte

## Endangered Orchids

Forest fires and illegal logging in Indonesia are threatening the survival of five of the 150 types of orchids found on the islands of Maluku. Chairperson of the Indonesian Orchid Lovers, Lenny Assegaf, called on the local governments and forest concession holders to support efforts to save the flowers from extinction. He listed the Latin names of only four of the five endangered species: *Dendrobium anytenatum*, *Gramathopylurn scriptum*, *Vanda hookeriana*, and *Dendrobium verativalium*. The fifth was identified by its local name, *Anggrek tongkeng*.

Source: Education Age 20/11/97



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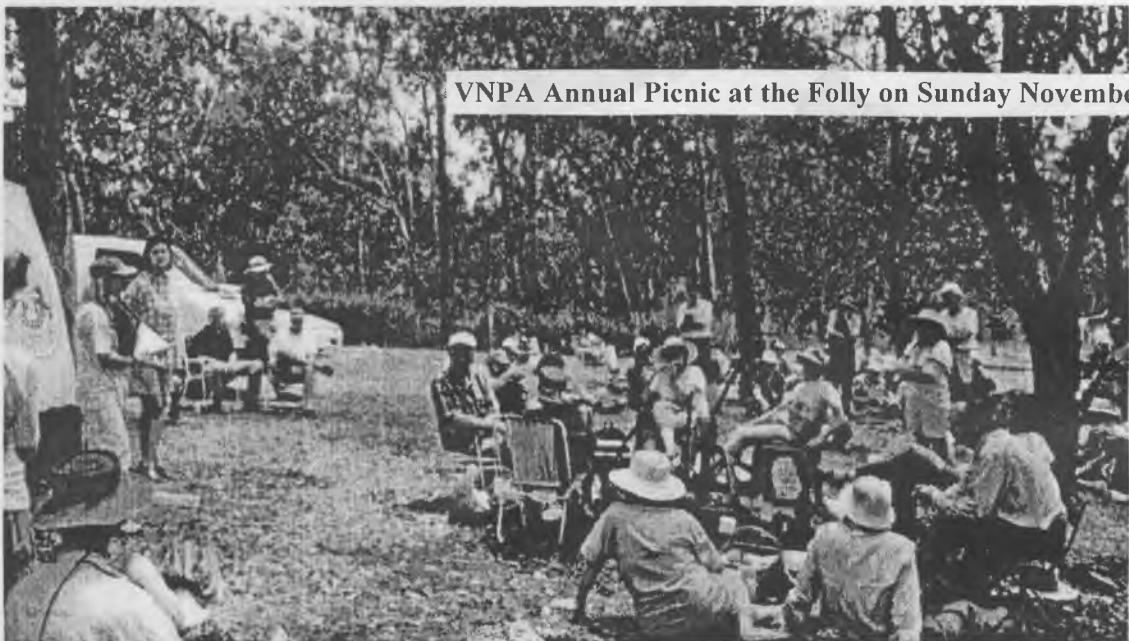
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19 DEC 1988



**VNPA Annual Picnic at the Folly on Sunday November the 23rd**