

September 1998

# Friends of Warrandyte State Park



## Newsletter

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

### Koalas Concerns

By Pat Coupar

There have been concerns over Warrandyte's koala population for some time now. Recently ranger David (Frankie) Farrar organised an informal meeting to discuss some of the issues. Those attending included Alan Webster, Flora and Fauna Guarantee Officer for the Port Phillip region, Julie Pryor, Wildlife Care Network, Donna Stoddart, environment officer for Manningham Shire and Brenda Hunter, FOWSP member and co-ordinator of the annual koala count for many years.

Some of the questions being asked are: Can Warrandyte sustain the current population of koalas? What is the health of our local koalas? Most of Warrandyte's koalas were released into the Park from French Island over ten years ago, many of these have since had offspring. These marsupials can live for 15 to 20 years in favourable conditions and their offspring have a 98% chance of survival so it is important to know just what the population is in Warrandyte.

Of particular concern is the state of the habitat. Koalas favour the narrow riparian strip of vegetation, particularly around Pound Bend. Their major food source is the Manna Gum and some of these trees are showing signs of severe stress. It seems the

Koalas chose the young epicormic growth - new shoots that arise from the tree when it is under stress. The more the animals eat, the more stressed the tree becomes. However, other factors may be involved in the tree's decline and for this reason, the use of collars is being considered to put around some of the affected Manna Gums to prevent the koalas from using them and to give the trees a chance to recover.

Julie Pryor is looking at a bigger picture. In recent years koalas have expanded their range into the suburbs where they are often found on *Eucalyptus nicholii* - a common plant in suburban gardens. Julie does not see this as a problem provided people are educated about the koalas requirements and especially the need to control dogs while the animals are in the area.

On November 8th, to coincide with the Warrandyte State Park koala count, it is hoped that counts will also be undertaken in the Shires of Manningham, Nillumbik and Maroondah. Once it has been established just what the population of koalas is in and around Warrandyte then other issues such as health and sustainability can be addressed.

If anyone would like further information on the koalas in Warrandyte State Park, or any wildlife for that matter, they can contact David Farrar at the Park on 9844 2659.



# Summer Slide Show

By Cathy Willis

What better way to spend a cold and rainy Winter's night than to escape to the summer sun of East Gippsland? The Coupars family have had a fascination with the National Parks of this region for many years. Late in July we were treated to a slide show of ten years worth of their eastern holidays condensed into a couple of hours.

Many FOWSP members are aware of Pat and Mikes' brilliant flora and fauna (respectively) photography. The slide show included some great examples but showed that they are also experts at capturing magnificent scenery. Magical beach sunsets, pristine rainforest creeks, glassy lakes - a feast for the eyes.

The barbeque burned to embers and sizzled in the drizzle as the Coupars began the show. With Ross manning the projector, Pat and Mike explained that we were off on a guided tour, complete with maps and useful reading material. To break the trip our first stop was at the Avon River, not too far from the Princes Highway. Only three hours from Melbourne, the slides proved that wilderness isn't necessarily remote.

Then on to East Gippsland. After a brief stop to check out the Cabbage Tree Palms (obligatory on any trip along the Princes Highway), we visited the Snowy River, Bemm River and Pearl Point, Errinundra, Sydenham Inlet, Croajingalong including Thurra and Mueller Rivers and Wingan Inlet, Coopracambra, Genoa River, the

Mallacoota area, and finally Howe Hill. What a trip! As the rain grew heavier we ooh'd and ahh'd at the sort of scenery that makes it into Wilderness Society diaries, but with a very personal touch. We heard about some bush camping sites the whole world doesn't know about, and Mike slipped a few photography 'tricks of the trade' in.

If you missed the slide night and haven't already explored this stunning part of Victoria, there is one book in particular to help you do it. It is an ACF publication by Grant Da Costa called *Car Touring and Bush Walking in East Gippsland*. While the Coupars used their 4WD, legs, collapsible boat, and even swam to get to a few more remote spots, most are accessible in a 2WD and many without long walks involved. The book gives excellent detail on how to get there, how long it will take and what to expect.

Many thanks to the Coupars for a great night that transported all present out of Warrandyte's winter dreariness.



## Nursery in Crisis

FOWSP is looking for a volunteer, preferably two, to take over from Pat and Cathy as nursery supervisors. The job would require at least one of these people to attend and organise each Thursday propagation morning. In addition they must be prepared to collect and sow seeds as required for Park revegetation, community needs and special orders (e.g. Melbourne Water plantings).

After much consideration Pat and Cathy feel, that having done the job for ten and seven years respectively, they can no longer commit the



time needed to maintain the nursery at a satisfactory level.

Running the nursery offers the opportunity to work with a great group of people - FOWSP members and Park staff. There is potential to learn and gain experience in plant propagation and plant identification with immense job satisfaction.

If anyone feels they can make this commitment, please ring either Pat on 9844 1650 or Cathy 9844 1841.

# Joy Update

Warrandyte's loss has been Minhamite's gain. Where Joy left off with her restoration of Brogil Creek she has taken up at her new home in Minhamite, Western Victoria, and once again she has worked miracles in a very short time.

The following extract comes from the Hamilton Spectator. The full article is pinned up on the 'Folly' noticeboard

## Garden of Joy

By Ruth Pihl

*Joy Hildebrand's garden is different. You notice firstly the 'Land for Wildlife' plaque on the front fence, then walk up pathways of strewn branches, over old carpet underlay and cardboard. You peer around grass tussocks and into to the faces of tiny native flowers. You watch birds splashing in her new wetlands development from the 'hide' erected to allow human peeping toms to delight in the frolics of our feathered friends.*

*At the 1.8 hectare (4.5 acre) address, sometimes lovingly called 'Hillbilly Heaven' you learn not just about a vision of restoration of the district's flora and fauna, but about Joy herself and this, it seems, is half the story.*

*Joy is keen to point out that there is less than one per cent of our Victorian grassland left and that it does not seem to be highly valued as it disappears under cloven hooves and roadmaking and other development. Inside her shadehouse tiny grasses are being incubated as is a small amount of native plant seeds which she has a permit to collect from local plants along nearby local remnants.*

*Tiny flowers, Chocolate Lilies, shyly appear out of the grass and send Joy into raptures of delight. These insignificant looking blooms are among the plants I am slowly coming to appreciate, along with a sense of delight in the emergence of a garden which, in only two years, is fast taking shape and fulfilling its purpose of restoration of native species and, at the same time, framing and enhancing the charm of the old schoolhouse.*

*Joy's quiet, warm manner and deep love of the countryside and its inhabitants, of whatever species, is infectious and has moved me from a position of detached amusement to one of great affection and keen interest. I know, each time I enter 'Hillbilly Heaven' there will be something new to see and a gardener of the first order leading the way.*



## Worth Repeating

### Grazing defies advice

By Kristin Owen

Conservation Minister Marie Tehan has defied scientific advice and renewed grazing licences for the folk made famous by the Man From Snowy River.

The licences allow cattle owners to run herds in the Alpine National Park - the only national park in Australia where it is permitted.

Fifty-six seven-year licences have been renewed, despite a report by three scientists, including one

from the CSIRO, opposing the move.

Grazing fees will rise from \$4 a head to \$5 a head for the 16-week season. But there had been calls for fees as high as \$24.

The licences were renewed despite an offer by conservationists to buy out some of them for \$16 a head.

The Victorian National Parks Association, which made the offer, has condemned the renewals "for both entrenching environmental damage and imposing scandalous costs on the public purse".

VNPA director Amanda Martin said the fees would not even pay the wages and costs of one staff member to oversee grazing.

Source: The Sun 21/8/98

## What's Flowering in Warrandyte?

**D**ue to good autumn and early winter rain, the wildflowers should be excellent this year. The wattles, Warrandyte has 17 indigenous species, have already put on a fantastic display during August and early September, most are now passed their peak.

Some of the most common and easy to find wildflowers that will be flowering during September, October and November are listed below. Best areas to see the flowers are Fourth Hill, Timber Reserve, The Common and Professor's Hill. Remember to keep to the tracks as many of these plants are very delicate.

Some books to aid in the identification of wildflowers are: Ian McCann's series including 'Forgotten Forests', 'The Mallee in Flower' and 'The Coast in Flower', 'Flora of Melbourne' and 'Flora of Warrandyte' (2 volumes) which can be borrowed from FOWSP or the Rangers Office.

### White Flowers

Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*) lily with grass-like leaves.

Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*) small lily.

Creamy Candles

(*Stackhousia monogyna*) erect herb, flowers in a spike

Common Rice-flower

(*Pimelea humilis*) straggling herb or small shrub.

### Yellow Flowers

Yellow Star (*Hypoxis* spp.) small lily.

Bulbine Lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*) lily with onion-like leaves.

Tiger, Leopard or Wallflower Orchids (*Diuris* spp.)



Button Everlasting (*Helichrysum scorpioides*) daisy with soft greyish-green leaves.

Yam Daisy (*Microseris lanceolata*) daisy with nodding flowerbuds.

### Yellow/Red/Orange

Golden bush-pea (*Pultenaea gunnii*) shrub with small rounded leaves.

Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea (*Daviesia leptophylla*) erect shrub with long narrow leaves.

Grey Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia cinarescens*) shrub with small greyish-green leaves.

### Red Flowers

Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*) creeper.

### Pink Flowers

Pink Fingers Orchid (*Caladenia carnea*)

Pink Bells (*Tetralochea ciliata*) small clumping shrub.

Grass Trigger-plant (*Stylidium graminifolium*) grass-like tuft with tall flower spike.

### Purple Flowers

Common Hovea (*Hovea linearis*) small creeper.

Purple Coral-pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*) creeper and climber.

Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*) lily with grass-like leaves.

Wax-lip Orchid (*Glossodia major*)

Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*) shrub with greyish fern-like leaves.

### Blue Flowers

Blue Star (*Chamaescilla corymbosa*) small lily.

Sun-orchids (*Thelymitra* spp.)

Bluebells

(*Wahlenbergia* spp.)

erect or straggling herbs.

Native Flax (*Linum marginale*) slender erect herb.

Flax-lilies (*Dianella* spp.) tufted lilies.

### Green Flowers

Greenhood Orchids

(*Pterostylis* spp.)



## Spring Camp

**When: Friday October 16th to  
Sunday 18th at**

**The Brisbane Ranges  
National Park**

A Perfect time for the wildflowers

Ranger, Chris Worrall (formerly of WSP) will be opening up a special camping site just for Fowspians. If you are interested in coming, a map of the area and location of the camp site is available - copies will be pinned up on the Folly noticeboard, so help yourself. Chris is looking forward to meeting us and showing us around his Park

# FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.

*This activities list will be pinned on the noticeboard in the Folly.*

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## SEPTEMBER 10TH: NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00am onwards.

## SEPTEMBER 17TH: NO NURSERY

**MORNING ACTIVITY:** It is a while since we've worked in 'Frogland' so there will be plenty of pruning, weeding and planting.

*Meet at the depot, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte at 10.00 am (Melways ref. map 23 G10)*

## SEPTEMBER 24TH: NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00am onwards.

## OCTOBER 8TH: NO NURSERY

**MORNING ACTIVITY:** A planting morning at Norman's Reserve. The area in the centre of the car park has been prepared by fencing and weed control. Now all we have to do is plant.

*Meet at the car park at the end of Bradleys Lane, Pound Bend Rd, Warrandyte at 10.00 am (Melways ref. map 23 G10)*

## OCTOBER 15TH: NURSERY

Propagation morning. 10.00am onwards.

## OCTOBER 22ND: NO NURSERY

**MORNING ACTIVITY:** Come and see one of the best wildflower areas in the Park. The vegetation is so significant, not only for Warrandyte but also the Melbourne region, that we are fencing it from rabbits. Park staff will be on hand to help with this project. Bring lunch (tea and coffee provided). After lunch there will be a guided walk to look at the wildflowers.

*Meet at the end of Harding Rd, Warrandyte at 10.00 am (Melways ref. map 35 H2)*

**For more information on any of these activities contact Jan Tindale 9844 3719**



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**If anyone has any requests for a Thursday activity please contact a member of the committee.**

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# Calendar of Sunday Events

OCTOBER 25TH

Ranger-in-Charge, Andy Nixon will be organising an activity on this day.

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## Dates for Your Diary

### Greening Australia Workshops

Greening Australia run lots of interesting workshops and FOWSP members are eligible for a significant discount. (You pay only \$10 instead of \$30). Even that \$10 will be refunded if you write an article on the workshop for our newsletter. For more information on any of these workshops ring the Training Co-ordinator on 9457 3024.

SEPTEMBER 19TH	Training Session "How to identify native plants".
OCTOBER 15TH	Training Session "Improving your plant ID skills - coastal & heathland"
OCTOBER 28TH	Training Session "Improving your plant ID skills -grasslands"
NOVEMBER 15TH	Training Session "Improving your plant ID skills -wetlands"

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### Port Phillip Community Training Program

OCTOBER 10TH "Celebrating community involvement - a one day festival to promote and acknowledge conservation volunteers". For more information ring Gerard Clark on 9457 3024

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## Green Wedge Environment Seminar Series

(Thank you to the City of Manningham for their sponsorship )

Time: First Thursday of each month at 7.30pm

Place: Warrandyte Community Centre (Melway 23 F11)

Entry: FREE! and SUPPER is provided

OCTOBER 1ST - **Wombat - Roger Martin**. Roger will discuss the distribution, habitat, breeding, social organisation, diet and conservation status of the wombat.

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### FOWSP Committee

Mike Coupar	9903 9567	Contact person	Alistair Traill	9722 1518
Ron Taylor	9844 4285	Contact person	Alison Thom	9844 3527
Flora Anderson	9722 1776	Public Officer	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter editor	Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Joan MacMahon	9844 3213	Newsletter editor	<u>Market</u>	
Anthony Owen	9844 1344	Treasurer/Membership Sec.	Betty Oke	9844 3763
Cathy Willis	9844 1841	Secretary	<u>Park Office</u>	9844 2659
Janie Vagg	9844 1425			

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## Spring Planting Festival

When: Sunday October 4th

Where: The Island, Warrandyte-Ringwood Rd, Warrandyte (Melways ref. map 23 H11)

For more information ring Margaret Burke on 9844 1060

# My Favourite Place

## "The Ridge"

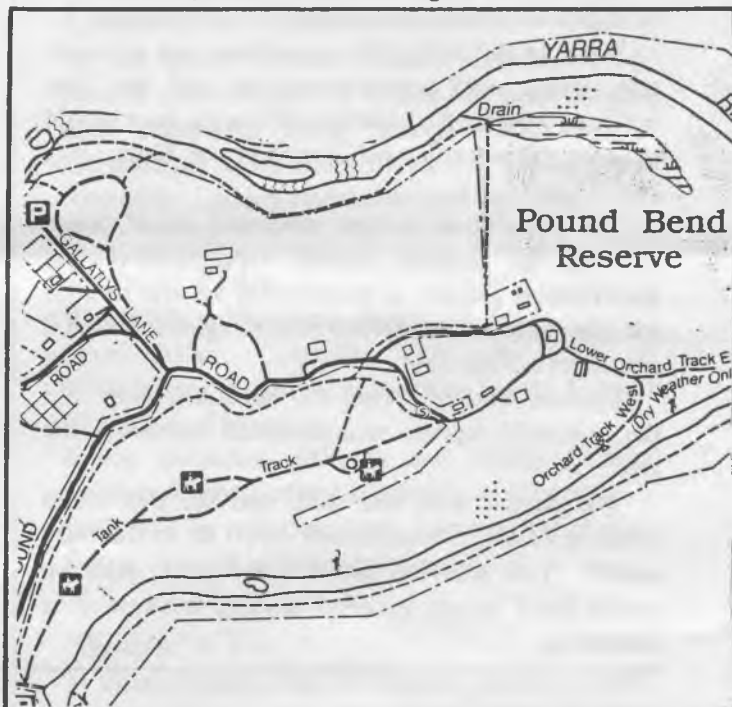
By Elizabeth Sevier



There are many special places in Warrandyte State Park, but one track that evokes a particular sense of wonder in me lies along the ridge above Pound Bend. The river flows around on the right and moves under the road through the tunnel, but if you leave it to ripple along and instead walk up the short rise in the path you will be heading for my place of delight.

There are two tracks through the Red Box and Yellow Box eucalypts over the top of the ridge. I take the right fork which is narrower and more winding. It climbs uphill more steeply than the other and passes through a changing sequence of plants. Bear's Ears and Cranberry Heath on the ground give way to mossy areas and then Saw-sedges and Tussock Grasses. Orchid 'hot spots' have been marked and fenced around by 'Friends' and Park staff over the years, and their appearance and flowering are enchanting.

My magic spot happens just over the top of the rise when you can look down through tea-tree, Plum-leaf Pomaderris and Burgan. For a short while nothing else intrudes, but the light shining and undulating through these small-leaved bushes. I sense a taste of magic. All too soon the necessity of the fire water tank changes the mood and the downward path ends in the road, the cleared spaces and practical activities again.



## Koala Count 1998

Friends of Warrandyte State Park

1.00pm Sunday 8th November

Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend  
Road, Warrandyte (Melways 23 C10)

Meet ranger David Farrar for briefing and preparation, at WSP Pound Bend depot.

The next koala survey extravaganza is about to happen! Where are our furry friends all hanging out? How are they breeding and where? Which trees are the chosen homes and diets at present? What sex distribution, age and state of health do our local population present?

We need lots of keen eyes to spy them out children are especially good at this!

Short and medium walks available.

Bring good walking shoes/gumboots for the, low tracks, binoculars, compasses and the pocket book "Trees of Victoria" by Costerman, if possible and something to share for afternoon tea.



After checking the WSP's koala population we will meet for a debriefing at the folly and share afternoon tea, damper and billy tea.

For more information ring Brenda Hunter 9379 7375 or the Park office 9844 2659.

# Worth Repeating

## Council goes out on on a limb to save tree

By Ben Hopkinson

A tree that halted Manningham Council's roundabout project for the intersection of Warrandyte and Harris Gully roads has been condemned by two independent arborists.

But it still may survive if alternative traffic management plans are accepted.

Work on the \$400,000 roundabout was all set to start, when local environmentalists said they had not been informed a century-old manna gum would be axed (*Doncaster and Templestowe News*, July 29).

The roundabout project reference panel, since widened to include several representatives of environment groups, is considering several options for the intersection which Manningham Council considers a black spot.

Mullum Mullum Ward Cr Patricia Young said the arborists' reports recommended removing the tree.

The danger was, she said, that the tree could create a hazard if branches dropped on to the busy corner. "Two arborists say it is not good. And we would have to cut it down anyway because it is dangerous.

"Lives are far more important to me than a tree - even if it is a lovely old tree.

"I am very sad that we have to take trees but there is no alternative in my view," Cr Young said.

She said the council felt it had completed the necessary consultation but "obviously missed a few people". If, after further deliberation, the council gave the roundabout the green light, work could start almost immediately, she said.

Manningham's director of city development, Lyndon Webb, agreed the tree's future was tenuous but said the council would consider other options including decreasing the speed limit or installing traffic lights.

He said one option being considered would be subject to a safety audit because the council feared it could create further hazards by sharpening the sweep of Warrandyte, Rd.

"We have to balance safety issues and environmental issues," Mr Webb said.

"At the same time there's a lot of people in the community saying: 'Why are you not going on with the work?'," he said.

Friends of Warrandyte State Park member Joan MacMahon said there was some doubt the tree's condition was as bad as suggested. The group would not oppose pruning any sections deemed dangerous.

Source: *Doncaster and Templestowe News* 26/8/98

## Weather Update

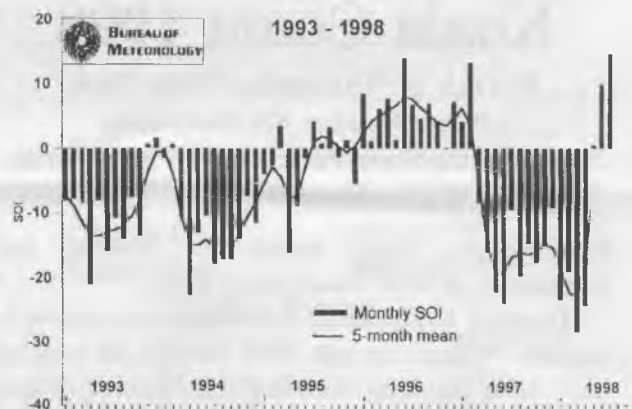
Since our last update several months ago the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) has changed dramatically, moving from a strongly negative reading to a strongly positive. But what does it all mean?

By now we should all have heard about El Nino, which translates from the Spanish as "the boy-child" and refers to the extensive warming of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. An SOI reading of below -10 is characteristic of El Nino and is often associated with below average rainfall over eastern Australia.

Less familiar perhaps is La Nina, which translates from the Spanish as "the girl-child" and refers to the extensive cooling of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. An SOI reading of above +10 is characteristic of La Nina and is often associated with above average rainfall over eastern Australia.

In July this year the SOI was recorded at +15 and certainly the eastern parts of Victoria and New South Wales have had well above average rainfall. In Warrandyte though the rainfall has

been only average for most of the year and August has been below average.



However, The bureau of meteorology has stated that the continued development of La Nina in the Pacific Ocean looks almost certain, although the precise time and strength remains unclear. They are prepared to say that in the outlook period from August to October there is a significant chance of above average rainfall across much of northern and eastern Australia. Sounds promising.



# "I SPY"

By B.G

## ***Farrar Foray***

On Sunday 30th August ranger David Farrar led a walk from Black Flat via Jumping Creek to Stane Brae (over six kilometres). At Stane Brae 18 Fowspian's enjoyed a sausage barbeque, cake and coffee for lunch. Thanks to all those who helped organise the day especially David Farrar, David Van Bockel, Cathy and Jenny Willis.

## ***Wurundjeri World***

As part of the Green Wedge Environmental Seminar series, about fifty people had an enlightening three hours with Ian Hunter on the 6th of August, when he spoke about the "Wurundjeri in Manningham" their history and lifestyle.

## ***Back from Broome***

Three regular helpers at the Thursday propagation mornings at the WSP nursery - Flora, Ray and Gwen - have been away, coincidentally all had gone through Broome on independent holidays.

## ***Zoo of the Future***

If you are looking forward to going to the Seal Rocks Sea Life Centre at the Nobbies, Phillip island, they should first talk to people who have already been there.

## ***Smoke Signals***

According to sources quoted in the Society for Growing Australian Plants - Maroondah Inc. (SGAP), June 1998 newsletter, "25% of Australian cities, including Melbourne, wood fire smoke has overtaken motor vehicles as

the main source of particle air pollution which can cause a range of lung diseases in winter".

## ***Cranbourne Conservation***

At the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, an area of about 0.5km by 0.5km has been cleared and excavated using heavy machinery in constructing a "developed area - an exciting new Australian Garden planned around the lakes".

## ***Federal Flora***

Watch this column nest month.

Peter Allan, Councillor for the City of Whitehorse, is the ALP candidate for the Federal Electorate of Menzies.

Kevin Andrews, MP, is the sitting Federal member for the Federal Electorate of Menzies.

Both will be revealing their favourite indigenous flower or plant in this column.

## ***"South" CFA***

11.00am Sunday 30th of August, Jumping Creek. A team of ten led by Second Lieutenant Nick Read, were found 'draughting (?drafting)' with three vehicle units in attendance. The South Warrandyte unit was practising the above procedure (pumping water from the Yarra River). It was good to see so many young people involved.

## ***Runagate Reporter Returns***

After eight weeks of sunshine and warmth in Darwin, Alice Springs and places en route, I am still trying to catch up with more local Park matters.



**The Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*)**

## **Welcome**

FOWSP would like to extend a warm welcome to new members **Artur Muchow** from Warrandyte South and **Ryan Lloyd** from Warrandyte.



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If undeliverable please return to  
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Warrandyte, 3113



## FOWSP Membership Form

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Tel. no. ....

Single \$15

Family \$20