

February 2001

# Friends of Warrandyte State Park



# Newsletter

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

## Community Grant Success

By Pat Coupar

**J**ust over \$14,700! That's how much FOWSP has been awarded for its nursery improvement. This large sum of money was the result of a successful application to Parks Victoria Volunteer Groups Grant for 2000/01 under the category environment.

The funding is for expansion of the WSP nursery to accommodate increasing propagation demands due, in the most part, to a Parks Victoria Biolink Riparian Restoration project. The aim of the Biolink project is to revegetate degraded areas and restore mid-storey vegetation along the river, primarily at Pound Bend Reserve. Around 25,000 plants are being propagated at the nursery for the project. Two Australian Trust Conservation Volunteers (ATCV) groups spent one week each at the Park last November pricking out several thousand seedlings, however, the bulk of the work is being carried out by the FOWSP Thursday group volunteers. The ongoing care and maintenance of so many vulnerable young plants is undoubtedly an added responsibility for our nursery manager especially over summer on days of searing heat and strong northerly winds.

Alterations to the nursery are already underway with an extension of the shade house, complete with watering system. White shade cloth (70%) is being used for the roof as, unlike the green version, it allows a full spectrum of light through and avoids the problem of the plants becoming 'leggy'.

Although the Parks Victoria Biolink order constitutes a large portion of this year's propagation, community needs have not been forgotten. The nursery manager plans to maintain

a diverse range of trees, shrubs, grasses, ground covers and wildflowers which will be available to members and non-members in return for a small donation.

This year more effort is being put into enrichment plantings. This will involve the propagation of threatened significant species – that is, those that are down to so few numbers in the Park they are considered locally endangered, with the possibility of them becoming locally extinct if no action is taken. With valuable advice from botanist Cam Beardsell, suitable sites have been selected in the Park for the plantings. The ultimate aim is to establish viable populations of rare species in their natural vegetation communities within the Park.

For Fowspians, year 2001 is shaping up as 'nursery odyssey' – an extended process of development and change, an adventurous journey.



**Tassel Sedge** – one of the rare and threatened species being grown at the nursery for enrichment planting.

# Dianella Diary

By JR

For the past two years an extensive flora survey had been carried out in WSP. The aim of this was to identify many plants and vegetation communities within the Park to assist staff with management.

Botanist Cam Beardsell's study over this period has discovered many rare or endangered plants, one of these being a *Dianella* species (Flax-lily). Whilst walking along the slashbreak beside Pound Bend Road, in December 1999, I also noticed some unusual *Dianella* species that warranted further investigation, one of which had white flowers. Shortly after, the 'brains trust' gathered and were unable to come up with a specific species type for these plants. Cam suggested we monitor these plants the following year when they were in flower and more accurate determination could be made.

It was decided that as the *Dianella* genus was under revision by botanist Geoff Carr of Ecology Australia, that Cam would invite him on a field trip to help establish what species we actually had in Warrandyte. Several people attended the field trip, which started at Pound Bend, including Ranger David Van Bockel.

The *Dianellas* on the slashbreak were very interesting to Geoff because he identified one of them as a white form of *Dianella longifolia* var. *longifolia*. The second was even more interesting as it appeared to be a species of *D. aff. grandis* var. *longifolia* (Warrandyte), which is an undescribed taxon. We found several other *D. aff. grandis* within the area also.

From there we drove to a private property to view *D. caerulea*, and by chance, we found something curious that Geoff Carr had seen only once before. It was a hybrid plant of *D. revoluta* and *D. longifolia* var. *longifolia*. As the temperature rose towards lunch, we expected more *Dianella* flowers to reveal themselves. Between sites Geoff's conversation included colourful anecdotes of other field trips as well as comments on other flora in the surrounding Warrandyte area.

Then we went out to the Watson's Creek area where Geoff identified more specimens that Cam had located over time. These turned out to be *D. aff. grandis* var. *longifolia* (Warrandyte).

So far we had only witnessed isolated and relatively small populations of plants, but the most exciting location was still to be visited. After lunch would be the ideal time as the flowers were sure to be open.

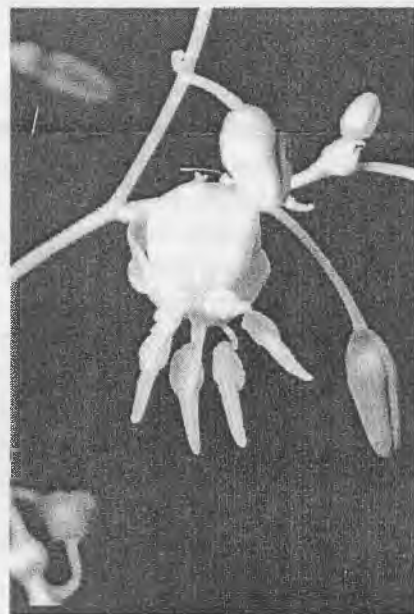
This weedy section in a little known area of Fourth Hill was where we encountered well over fifty plants, mostly in flower. These were again the 'grandis' Warrandyte species, including one white flowered form. A significant number of hybrid plants were found in this population, namely 'grandis' and *revoluta* cross and 'grandis' and *longifolia* var. *longifolia* cross. Geoff used this site to demonstrate identification of the hybrid *Dianellas* by their different leaf colour and serration etc. Geoff collected some samples from this population for formal identification.

We learned how to identify the various *Dianella* species in the area and discussed other possible sites for the 'grandis' and plants that we had previously encountered, but may now turn out to be the 'grandis'. We decided to search over the next week or two to see if we could locate more.

So far, to our knowledge the 'grandis' appears to be restricted to the Warrandyte area and the Yarra Valley region. A single plant was also discovered, to my surprise, in the nursery, which happened to be collected by an unknown person and misidentified and grown as *D. longifolia*.

Another case of misidentification was a *Dianella* growing in a council reserve in Templestowe. This was thought to be 'grandis', but turns out to be *D. amoena* which is not only a Victorian Rare or Threatened Plant (VROT) but an Australian Rare or Threatened Plant (AROT). The appropriate management authorities have been informed of this exciting discovery.

It was a most enjoyable and educational field trip that helped us appreciate the unique values of Warrandyte State Park and the regions natural bushland areas.



# Volunteering in South Africa Parks

By Andy Nixon

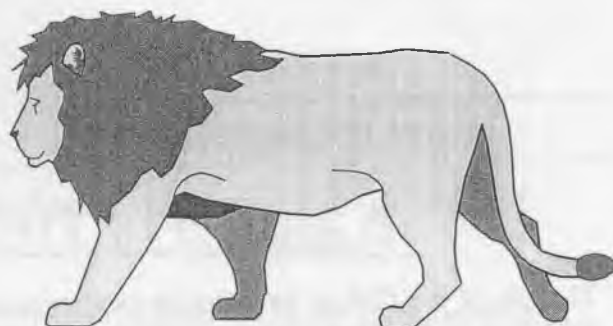
Last September/October I had the pleasure of attending an International Rangers Federation congress in Kruger National Park, South Africa. What a place. Kruger National Park – over 2 million hectares, 3000 staff, and it takes you more than a day and a half to drive from one end to the other! More than 330 folk, principally rangers, from 57 countries attended the congress.

An aspect of the congress that did make it so successful was the support given by the National Parks volunteer corps. They assisted in many aspects of the congress – guiding, serving meals, information desk, etc. This specific group of volunteers are known as the honorary wardens. They are uniformed (you FOWSPIAN's would look rather good in uniform.....), appropriately badged, and given targeted training. They can carry out roles similar to many of our Friends Groups – revegetation, asset construction, cultural protection and information services, but also activities like patrolling, visitor services / information, and a very popular one – wildlife management assistance. (The reason for most of them being involved is their love of African wildlife. And I can see why). Before

becoming an honorary warden they have to apply, have an interview, do initial training and then sit a test. How daunting. But the result is some very good folk very dedicated to their passionate involvement. And what about this. A couple of them were staying in one of the park houses a few years ago. The staff houses are in an unfenced area of the park open to the movement of the animals. It was a drought, so they had turned on the sprinkler to give the front lawn a water. Looking out the lounge window what did they see ? .....

....this feels wonderful said the Hippopotamus rolling across the top of the sprinkler !! - "Your turn to move the sprinkler Ben" -.

(Watch out you FOWSP nursery folk when the sprinklers come on. I've heard the koalas reckon it's a good place to be on a hot day).



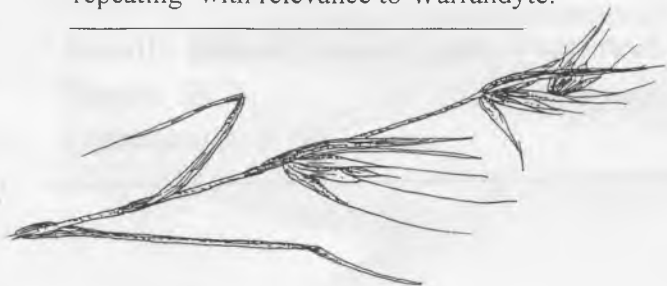
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## A Day of Panic

By The Editor

The December newsletter was finished and posted. Relief. No more newsletters until February 2001. It seemed an age away; Christmas, New Year and a short holiday all lay ahead. But suddenly there we were approaching the middle of January and I had nothing in hand and no ideas. No new material, just a couple of old 'worth repeatings' which I had been saving for an emergency and this was looking like it might be that emergency!

Having a month off had lulled me into a sense of false security. I woke in a panic. It was Thursday, and in my desperation I asked everyone I saw down at the nursery that day if they could write something. Anything. The response was fantastic and I would like to thank everyone who came to my rescue so swiftly. The result is this newsletter with its diverse range of stories and experiences. I even found a 'worth repeating' with relevance to Warrandyte.



# Relaxation

By Jeni Willis

**R**elaxation. It means something different for everyone. At this time of year most of us get to spend a portion of time (no matter how unjustly short), just relaxing. Some people do so at the Boxing Day test, others like to walk up cool mountains or just sit around the house and read. Undeniably and understandably Australians seem to have a great affinity for water based relaxation, whether it be swimming in the suburban backyard pool, sitting astride a board beyond the breakers or seeing Warrandyte from a rapid rider, most of us enjoy one form or another.

Fishing is one of the few water activities that I thought I would never find relaxing or fun. I have

been proven wrong. Two friends and myself reluctantly followed a third friend to the Point at Metung for "just half an hour's fishing" before dinner. Three hours later I was standing thigh deep in warm lake water, watching pelicans glide across the still velvety lake as the sun sunk beneath it. All four of us stood silent (it was too dark for the jet skiers!), listening to the fish jump and plop. Although we were admittedly fishing more for an excuse to stand in the water with a beer than for anything else, we eventually caught a couple of flathead for dinner. So at ten o'clock we got the fish, stuffed with herbs and lemon onto the coals of the fire, and enjoyed the best meal of our holiday.

I never realised being eaten alive by mosquitoes and stinking of rank white bait could be so good for the soul

## Worth Repeating

### The Yarra clean-up is far from finished

The aim of the EPA to have people swimming in the whole of the Yarra River by 2008 is admirable. However, when an article can be written on the state of the Yarra (*The Age*, 9/1) without mention of urban stormwater, the greatest threat to the river, it is difficult to share their optimism.

The Yarra is in better condition than it was 30 years ago, primarily because of the connection of most of the metropolitan area to the sewerage system during the 1970s and 1980s. Big problems remain and, as Melbourne expands, big investments and greater community awareness are required to prevent them getting worse, let alone to improve them. Toxicants, such as heavy metals, and litter were highlighted. A third concern should be added: high nutrient levels, particularly during floods, which pose a serious threat to the health of Port Phillip Bay. These three problems all largely arise from the same source: urban stormwater.

Melbourne has an excellent stormwater system, which efficiently drains rainwater. Unfortunately it also efficiently washes pollutants that build up on hard surfaces straight into streams.

By most measures, the Yarra is in moderate to good condition upstream of Warrandyte. There is a

sharp decline in several ecological indicators downstream of Mullum Mullum Creek. Concentrations of heavy metals are high in some places, namely the lower reaches, where the cumulative effect of urban stormwater is greatest and the ecological condition is worst.

Little evidence exists to support the assertion that Yarra platypus numbers have risen in the past century. How many platypus lived in the Yarra downstream of Templestowe, or in Merri, Darebin, Moonee Ponds and Gardiners Creeks 150 years ago? Nobody knows, but my guess is a lot more than the near zero to be found today.

To achieve the EPA's aim of a swimmable Yarra within seven years, new developments in the catchment will need to be regulated and designed to minimise stormwater impacts. Existing stormwater systems need re-engineering to reduce pollutant loads. The government's allocation of \$22.5 million to the Stormwater Action Program for the state is a good start. However, improvement of the Yarra, perhaps just prevention of further degradation upstream, will require a much greater investment of capital and political will.

Chris Walsh  
Cooperative Research Centre  
Freshwater Ecology, Monash University

Source: *The Age* 11/1/01

# 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.*

## **FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup> NURSERY**

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.  
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

## **MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup> NURSERY**

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.  
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

## **FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> NURSERY**

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.  
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

## **MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup> NURSERY**

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.  
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

## **FEBRUARY 22<sup>ND</sup> NURSERY**

Propagation morning. 10.00 am onwards.  
Plant sales (by donation) 10.00am-12md

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## **Subscriptions for 2001 are now due**

To renew your membership to FOWSP for the coming year please fill in the form below and send it to the secretary FOWSP, PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

Membership entitles you to one free plant a month from the market stall, 11 newsletters per year and the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities including slide nights and excursions throughout the year.

Thank you for your support.



Name .....

Address .....

..... Tel. no. ....

Family \$20

Single \$15

Concession \$10



## FOWSP Committee 2000

Mike Coupar	9903 9567	Contact person		
Flora Anderson	9722 1776	Public Officer		
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Editor	Julie Pryor	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u> 9722 1117
Ray Clarke	9844 2351	Treasurer		
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary		<u>Market</u>
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary	Marie Krause	9712 0498
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894			
Cathy Willis	9844 1841		<u>Park Office</u>	9844 2659
Alastair Traill	9722 1518			
Anthony Owen	9844 4867			
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797		<u>Nursery Manager</u>	0408800026

FOWSP Committee Meetings for 2001 will be held at 7.30 pm on the second  
Tuesday of each month. Date for 2000 are as follows:

No meeting in January

February 13<sup>th</sup>

March 13<sup>th</sup>

April 10<sup>th</sup>

May 8<sup>th</sup>

June 12<sup>th</sup>

July 10<sup>th</sup>

August 14<sup>th</sup>

September 11<sup>th</sup>

October 9<sup>th</sup>

November 13<sup>th</sup>

## Plant Sales (By donation)

Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> February	10.00am-12md
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> February	10.00am-12md
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February	10.00am-12md
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> March	10.00am-12md
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	3.00pm-4.00pm
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	10.00am-12md
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> March	10.00am-12md

## Friends Network Conference

“Friends – it takes all sorts”

Tidal River, Wilsons Promontory National Park

March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>

Workshops, snorkelling, talks, beach walks, meet with other Friends groups

Enquiries: Robert Irvine (W) 9280 3371 (H) 9744 6395

Maelor Himbury (W) 9366 2555 (H) 9374 1902

Marion Taylor 5983 1580

**Deadline for March Newsletter is  
February 25<sup>th</sup>**

## Book Review

By Cathy Willis

### Wildflowers of Victoria and adjoining areas

Margaret G. Corrick, Bruce A. Fuhrer

*Bloomings Books October 2000*

The very first thing I liked about this new book is the look and feel. The cover shows a quartet of Mountain Correa flowers, pale green on a dark background, highlighting the understated beauty in the detail. A hardback slightly smaller than A4 size, it is small enough to fit into a daypack, but substantial enough to sit on the coffee table.

Both authors are well qualified to write such a book. Margaret Corrick has had a long association with the Herbarium of Vic. Bruce Fuhrer is well known to many FOWSPians, especially for his fungi work and the walks he has lead for us, but also for his wide ranging knowledge of ecology. Most of the stunning photographs in the book are taken by him.

Inside the front and back covers there is a map of Victoria showing the natural regions. Unlike many similar maps I've seen, the colours chosen make it very easy to differentiate between regions. The introduction gives brief descriptions of the regions including geomorphology, changes due to white colonization and fire regimes, signature species, and where you can find the best remaining remnants of vegetation communities. Under "Scope and Layout" the authors state that this is not an exhaustive botanical work. Most trees, orchids and grasses have been omitted. These are either well covered by other recent books, or could not be adequately described in this type of format.



The plants are set out in families, alphabetically. Each family, genus, and species is briefly described, many including origins of botanical names, aboriginal names and usage where relevant. Photo size varies, with generally three to four per page, the descriptions beside them. Distribution is listed after each species by an acronym of the natural regions where they occur. This is a common way of listing distribution that I always find a bit annoying as you continually have to refer back to the introduction. A bookmark with the codes on it (such as in Flora of Melbourne) would be a welcome bonus.

I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in Victorian plants. It is very accessible whatever your level of knowledge, while also providing enough botanical detail in descriptions for those who want it. It was a great Christmas present, if you didn't get it put it on your birthday list.

## Zoological Meanings



*Trichosurus vulpecula*

(Common Brushtail Possum)

"little-fox-like hairy-tail"

# My Favourite Road

By Andy Nixon

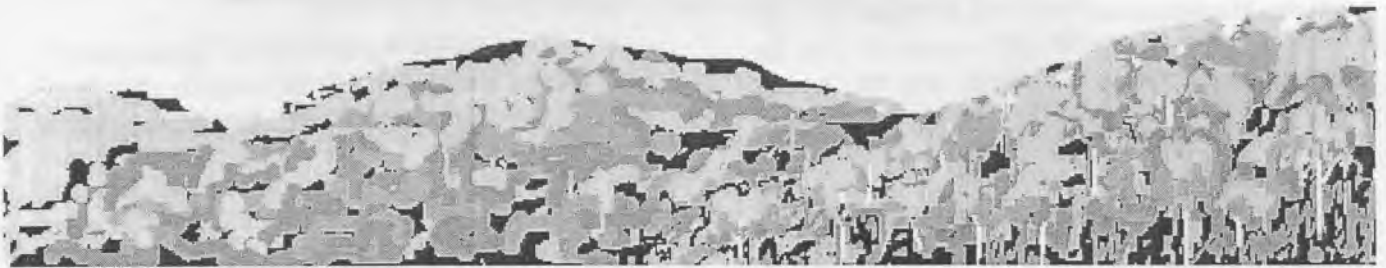
*I*t's a far croo'nin that is pullin me away, as step I we' ma cromack down the road..... What a great tune (and words) to hum as you stride, or drive down your favourite country road. A Gaelic tune, 'The Road to the Isles' me thinks. Well this favourite road does not look out to the islands but it does look down over a ragged tray of water – Lake Eildon.

The Skyline road runs from Haines Saddle, which is just at the top of the entrance down into the Devil's Cove camping area of Lake Eildon National Park, to Bonnie Doon in the north. A large part of it follows the ridge that looks directly down onto the lake. In total it's around 26 kilometres, with terrific views of the lake and

curtained by a spectacular backdrop of hills and mountains stretching far to the east - much of it being the Alpine National Park. The rising cone of Mt Torbreck and the shadowy silhouette of Mount Terrible to name two.

If travelling through to north east Victoria it can make a wonderful and leisurely detour. Make sure that you turn right at the junction with Sonnenberg Drive (just past Proctor Hill – VicRoads Country directory Map 62 F3), as this enhances the drive with views over the Bonnie Doon arm of the lake and with Mt Buller dominating the horizon to the east. The road traverses that classic dry, red box / red stringybark country, manna and candlebark gums in the shaded gullies as also blackwood, lightwood, cassinia and plenty of peas. Much like Warrandyte!

Anyway, what's a cromack ?



## Flora's Garden

As part of the Australian Open Garden Scheme, FOWSP committee member, Flora Anderson, is opening her garden to the public. Those who haven't seen Flora's garden are in for a real treat.

**Date and Time:** Saturday March 31<sup>st</sup> 10.am-4.30pm  
Sunday April 1<sup>st</sup> 10.am-4.30pm

**Place:** 2, Styles Court, Wonga Park

**Cost:** \$4.20 admission (35% goes to Australian Bush Heritage & 65% to Australian Garden Scheme)

Bring a picnic if you like. Morning and afternoon tea for sale

A harpist will be playing both afternoons.

Indigenous plants for sale



## Another Favourite Place

By Ray Clarke

On the road from Launching Place to Gembrook, just north of Beenak Road you come to Ship Rock on the west side of the road. A track from the car park takes you a short distance to The Rock, which is an impressive granite monolith, surrounded by stringybark forest and dense understorey. Stay with the track down into a fern gully. Here McCrae Creek runs out from underground through granite slabs and drops quietly over falls. It is cool, tree-shaded and

the only sounds are of the splashing creek and perhaps a bird call. Sit there on a log and feel relaxation seep through mind and body.





## ***Our Own***

Pat Coupar and Betty Oke received Australia Day 2001 Community Awards for their respective work with and for the Friends of Warrandyte State Park.

## ***Seedling Scene***

As of January 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 there were approximately 36,000 seedlings living in the hot houses, shade houses and hardening off areas at the WSP nursery at the depot.

## ***Seedling Surprise***

In a once in a millennium effort yours truly helped prick out seedlings into tubes. One observer commented "The first time I've seen Ben hand's on"

## ***Weed Weft***

Anna Richtarik, a temporary ranger, was observed around helping Ranger, David Van Bockel, with the mapping of weeds within WSP. Anna was using a GPS and had just walked around Pound Bend plotting bridges and power poles as reference points along the new walking tracks.

## ***Bush Fly Bus***

The Australian bush fly is now thought to have been the vehicle on which the Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD) hitched a ride to the Australian mainland in October 1995. The virus escaped the quarantined research facility on Wardang Island off the South Australian coast.

*Source: Ecos Oct/Dec 2000*

## ***Tinny Time***

Late January four men and a 'tinny' (boat) were seen, part drifting in and part pushing it along, the 'other side' of the Yarra. They were treating river-damaging willows on the bank. Enquiry revealed that they were from 'Weeds Needs', contracted by Melbourne Water. A cool activity on a hot and humid day.

## ***Vascular View***

With the usual team on Thursday was Melanie Birtchell who is starting an honors in botany this year. Topic – vascular plants on the granite outcrop in North-east Victoria and bio-geographical differences.

## ***Devils and Dragons***

A letter from Fowspian Angelique Stefanotos from Alice Springs lets us know that she is now doing regular 'Birds of Prey' Nature Theatre shows, breeding Death Adders and helping to hatch Thorny Devils. She is going on a field trip to Andado

Station which borders the Simpson Desert on one side and the Finke River Floodout (classic Coolibah swamp) on the other. Angie and others will be looking for some Painted Dragons and Cane-grass Dragons for breeding. Angie is coming to Melbourne in February.

## ***Tanya's Time***

Tanya White, summer ranger, reports that several successful activities took place at the Park over the holidays – including a night walk which was booked out, a gold walk, breakfast with the birds (24 people) and 26 people at the koala count. Unfortunately the 'Discover Mount Lofty' activity was cancelled because of the Total Fire Ban and a 40C day. The 'Timelines Walk' and 'Earth Games' did not go ahead.

## ***Coupar Cops It***

Pat Coupar had been ill for several weeks, we hope her recovery is not too long away.

## ***Irrational Rationalisation***

".....the most serious 'sustainability' issues have arisen where food production has become a large scale mechanised factory. ....vast tonnages of fruits such as apricots are picked firm before nature has added their 'raison d'être' – the flavour. ....where a tasty bean will be rejected because it is bent..." *Source: Ecos 2001*

## ***Seedling Slaughter***

Hidden in the depths of this column – the nursery manager reports on the seedlings pricked out by Ben "most of them died – mix too dry". I repent.

## ***Rabbit Reduction***

The RCD is believed to have halved Australia's rabbit population to 150 million since 1995. The subsequent return of mulgas, native grasses and other shrubs in the Mulga lands are giving wild life researchers hope that numerous animals on the endangered species list may yet be saved. "We used to think depressions out in the sandhill country were naturally bare, because no one in living memory had seen it any different. It now turns out that they are a productive Mitchell grass ecosystem"

*Source: Ecos-Ibid*

## ***Any Awards***

One aspect of any awards system is that so many people are missed. In my opinion one of these is David Van Bockel, who as well as his Ranger work load, has put in uncountable extra hours over the last ten years with the 'Friends' and working on the Flora of Warrandyte. There are several other staff at the Park who have also contributed to our success. Their names will be noted in this column in the future.



Surface  
Mail  
only

Postage  
Paid

**Nankeen Night Heron**  
(*Nycticorax caledonicus*)

One of Warrandyte's shy birds. Sometimes seen sitting motionless during the day on a branch along quiet stretches of the river. As its name suggests it is nocturnal, feeding at night on yabbies, frogs, fish and other freshwater animal life.



## FOWSP Membership Form

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Tel. no. ....

Family     \$20  
Single     \$15  
Concession \$10