THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK **NEWSLETTER**

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Healthy Parks Healthy People[®]

Living Links

Shaping the Future: Living Links Strategic Plan 2025–2035

Our President, Judith Sise, and Secretary, Margaret Hunter, recently attended two workshops focused on shaping the *Living Links Strategic Plan* for the next decade.

Established in 2006, Living Links is a visionary, long-term initiative designed to connect and enhance natural spaces across Melbourne's south-east—particularly within the 85,500-hectare Dandenong Creek catchment. The program not only aims to support biodiversity but also to foster meaningful connections between people and nature in an increasingly urban landscape.

The region includes some of Melbourne's most treasured natural areas: the Edithvale–Seaford Wetlands (a Ramsar-listed site), Braeside Park, Lysterfield Lake, Jells Park, the Dandenong Valley Parklands and the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne.

Several draft vision statements are under consideration, including:

- An urban web of biodiverse, resilient, thriving ecosystems where positive interactions between people and nature take place.
- An urban web of green, connected natural spaces and corridors where people and nature thrive.

A connected, biodiverse urban catchment where people work together as custodians of nature.

These vision statements inform a set of strategic goals, focusing on biodiversity, community engagement, securing funding, and working in partnership with the Bunurong Land Council. From these goals, specific actions are developed—such as revegetation, education, advocacy, and research—all aligned with the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound).

Melbourne Water will coordinate the next phase: a three-year Action Plan. Its success will depend on the collaborative efforts of ten councils, two water boards, Parks Victoria, VicRoads, three community groups, one TAFE, and the Bunurong Land Council.

It's a complex and demanding process—but highly relevant to Friends of Braeside Park. As a recognised natural treasure, Braeside Park stands to benefit directly from Living Links' strategies, and so do we as Friends.

Judith Sise

Parliamentary Friends of Landcare - landcare and environmental volunteer showcase

Volunteers from across Victoria have showcased their efforts caring for the state's environment at an exhibition held at Parliament House. Landcare Victoria and Victorian Environment Friends Network joined forces for the Victorian Environmental Volunteer Showcase.

The establishment of the Victorian Parliamentary Friends of Landcare (VPFL) demonstrates the importance of fostering collaboration at every level, to ensure the longevity of these efforts. This event was a fantastic opportunity to give MPs a better understanding of the critical role of landcare, in not only addressing environmental and agricultural issues, but also supporting community resilience and connection.



This week also marks the 38th birthday of landcare, launched on 25 November 1986, by then Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands Joan Kirner and then president of the Victorian Farmers Federation Heather Mitchell

The VPFL is co-convened by Member for North-Eastern Metropolitan Region Richard Welch and Member for Ripon Martha Haylett, with Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh serving as secretary. These three advocates for landcare spearhead the bipartisan group, which has around 40 members from across the political spectrum.

The VPFL aims to serve as an ongoing platform to build awareness, strengthen advocacy, and foster collaboration in support of Landcare's mission to create a sustainable future for Victoria.

Margaret Hunter and I attended the Landcare and Friends volunteer showcase on Wednesday 18 March at Parliament House. We shared a trestle table with the Greater



Dandenong Environment Group's President Isabelle Nash and Judith Sise, Secretary. With our two banners and wearing our groups' polo shirts, we were obviously from the metropolitan south-east.

During parliamentary sittings we talked to Brad Battin, Liberal Leader and MP for Berwick, Eden Foster, Labour MP for Mulgrave, Lee Tarmalis, Labor Member for the South Eastern Metropolitan Region, Ann-Marie Hermans Liberal MP, Member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region, Paul Mercurio, MP for Hastings and many incredible Landcare and Friends volunteers. Networking gave us many ideas and insights into how Landcare and other Friends' groups work. It was worthwhile day.

Judith Sise

Below are links to videos and a review of the day.

https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/news/environment/landcare#:~:text=Volunteers%20from%20across%20Victoria%20have,the%20Victorian%20Environmental%20Volunteer%20Showcase

https://www.google.com/search?q=parliament+showcase+of+volunteers+landcare&rlz=1C1FKPE_en_ GBAU1093AU1094&oq=parliament+showcase+of+volunteers+landcare&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIHC AEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigAdIBCTI0NTM0ajBqN6gCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:4c0a1467,vid:MTEiKbFPEuU,st:0

Bootcamp in the Burrows: Sofie and Judith Tackle Rabbits with VRAN

From 24–26 March, Sofie and I (Judith) attended the VRAN Leadership in Rabbit Management Bootcamp in Warrnambool — and what an eye-opener it was!

Run by the Victorian Rabbit Action Network, the course brought together 27 participants from



across Victoria: local councils, water authorities, Landcare groups, Traditional Owners, and conservation organisations. We were proud to be the only *volunteers* attending!

The program offered a powerful blend of classroom learning and hands-on fieldwork. We spotlighted from the back of a ute (safely-ish!), learned to use smoke to locate burrows, examined bait stations and warren cross-sections, and witnessed fumigation, ripping, and even warren implosion demonstrations.

Most importantly, we learned the language of **management**, not just **control**. For example, we now talk about *rabbit-resistant fences* — a subtle but critical distinction. After a decade of refining the course, VRAN's 2½-day program is now a gold standard in rabbit management education.

Thanks to VRAN, all meals and accommodation were provided — including gluten-free for Sofie and vegetarian for me. Despite a slight hiccup in the Burnley Tunnel, it was an amazing experience.

We're now looking forward to working closely with Ranger Janelle

Cadd and Chief Ranger Adrian Howard to bring what we learned back to Braeside Park. Watch this space!







Insects Around the Visitors' Centre – April 2025

One quiet Sunday afternoon in early autumn, while watering last summer's plantings near the Visitors Centre, I had the pleasure of meeting members of the Victorian Field Naturalists Club's invertebrate group. Despite the dry start to the season, their expert eyes quickly uncovered a buzzing world I had barely noticed.

Among the highlights was a striking Golden Orb-weaving Spider (Trichonephila edulis)—rarely seen this far south spun between two Banksias. Nearby, nestled in Poa grass just off the walking path, sat a vibrant Banded Garden Spider (Argiope trifasciata).

Even more exciting, a wingless female Clouded Footman moth (Anestia ombrophanes) was spotted guarding her eggs—beautifully captured in a photo by one of the Field Naturalists. A male, with wings, was also seen in the park, and another pair was reported the following day in Blackburn Lake. It seems egg-laying season is underway!





Other insects found included leafhoppers, two-tailed spiders, a social house spider, an Australian leafroller, members of the Fatinae group, the Australian crop mirid, and a grey planthopper.

The takeaway? Even when it seems quiet, there's plenty happening if you look closely!

Thanks to Wendy Clark of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria for the wonderful photographs.

Judith Sise

From the Secretary

Thank you to those that attended the initial night walk on 11 April. We had good viewings and an enjoyable evenings viewing of the nocturnal animals.

Upcoming activities include Autumn Walk on 18 May 2.00 pm, May night walk 2 May, and planning for possible frog night if we get sufficient rain to get the frogs in Braeside Park active. Booking by usual arrangements.

Looking further ahead we have National Tree Day at the end of July with assistance from Ranger Janelle.

Reflections on the residents of Braeside Park and rare occurrences

Recently many of our readers will have been thrilled and engrossed by the stories and photos of the now large ducklings - a group of rare Pink Eared ducklings for last 6 weeks. Thank you to Rodger who has visited very frequently, often for several hours and then posting on our Facebook site. He often waits



silently for hours to record this wonderful story of the birds of Braeside Park with descriptions of the parents, and efforts at feeding, swimming and now looking at flying.

Like others I am very touched by this and its make me feel that that world is a better place. A Facebook search tonight (22 April) has seen a small musk

duckling and parent. So perhaps climate change is with us with these rare occurrences. It makes my day to see this as well as a seasoned environmentalist of 20 plus years.

Margaret Hunter



Water Watch

APRIL WATER WATCH REPORT

Judith, Sofie and Vicky met at 8:30 am at the Nursery to begin their third Water Watch monitoring for 2025. The two creeks are still dry so only the Wetlands and Drain were monitored. Both had low water levels and were muddy, which made sweeping and netting difficult. The number of macroinvertebrates was low. Both sites had a poor rating based on the abundance and bug score. Below is April's chemical tests results.

Judith Sise





Quantity: 2 Score: 5

Dragonfly Nymph

(Acarina)

	Bent Bridge	Sherry Bridge	Dingley Drain	Wet- lands	
Temper- ature	NO WA- TER	NO WA- TER			
Air			21	16	
Water			19	17	
рН			7	8	
E.C.			650	1070	Larva
Turbidly			100	200	- dan
Ammo- nium			0.30	0.04	
Phos- phorus			0.6	0.4	
Oxygen			3	6	

E 15 13 setland SherryC Bentt



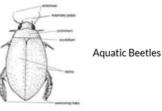
Non Biting Midge Larvae

- Bloodworms (Diptera) Quantity: 1 Score: 1



4. Drain

ae (Diptera) ntity: 10 Score: 2



- Diving Beetles, Whirligig Beetles (Coleoptera) Quantity: 2 Score: 3

Ferns

Knox Environment Society Workshop Report Date: April 5, 2025 Location: Burwood Hwy Nursery Topic: Propagating Native Ferns

Most revegetation efforts in urban areas overlook ferns, yet they are an essential part of our local biodiversity. In Knox, many native fern species have been pushed to the brink of extinction in creek and river habitats. To address this, the Knox Environment Society (KES) hosted a special workshop led by local "fernspert" (fern expert), John Exon.

Invited by KES President Richard Faragh, John shared his knowledge, experience, and techniques for propagating native ferns—an effort he began six years ago with the goal of "putting ferns back into Fern Tree Gully." Thanks to his dedication, the KES nursery now has around 10 local fern species available.

John emphasised that **patience** is the most critical ingredient in fern propagation. For example, tree ferns can take 2–3 years just to propagate! His approach combines detailed research with hands-on experimentation.

During the workshop, John passed around various fern fronds to illustrate the unique placement of spores across different species. He explained that in tree ferns, the soft tree fern bears spores around the edges of the fronds, while rough tree ferns have them between the branchlets. The darker the spore cells, the more mature they are—despite their surprisingly yellow colour and dust-like fineness.

John's propagation method involves:

- A sterilised mix of **75% perlite and 25% peat**, treated with boiling water and left covered for several hours.
- Light sprinkling of spores, followed by careful storage in a propagation box **out of direct sunlight** and kept moist with fine misting.
- After 2–3 months, the emerging **gametophytes** (the first growth stage, often mistaken for liverworts) are pricked out and repotted into a mix of **6 parts potting mix**, **1 part perlite**, and **1 part compost or leaf mould**.

Eventually, small fronds appear, and another round of repotting begins.

No wonder ferns are sold at KES for \$10 a pot—it's a slow and careful process! The presentation was both fascinating and eye-opening, especially for those who may have only encountered ferns growing under water tanks or during walks in Tasmania and New Zealand's wet forests.

Closer to home, we also have **Bracken**, the largest of our native ferns, growing in Braeside Park. As a **pteridophyte**, Bracken has vascular tissue but reproduces via spores rather than seeds. Its large, green, triangular fronds alternate along the stem, making it a striking and resilient part of our local flora.

Looking ahead, our **May workshop will focus on propagating Banksias from cuttings**, which has already generated excitement among the propagation team. I've also suggested a potential workshop in **July on wetland plants**—stay tuned!

Judith Sise

President / Coordinator of Propagation Nursery



Melbourne Peri-urban Deer Control Forum – A Growing Challenge

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

I recently attended the Melbourne Peri-urban Deer Control Forum, hosted by the Living Links Collaboration. The forum brought together a diverse and knowledgeable group of researchers from Melbourne University, CSIRO, and the Arthur Rylah Institute, along with local council pest officers, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, DEECA officers, Landcare groups, and concerned landowners. Deer numbers in Victoria are on the rise, with four established species—Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), Red (*Cervus elaphus*), Fallow (*Dama dama*), and Hog Deer (*Axis porcinus*)—all now found across the state. Although classified as 'game' under the *Wildlife Act 1975*, these species can still be controlled when causing damage. And the damage is significant: deer degrade native habitats, trample vegetation, ringbark young trees, pollute waterholes, erode soil, and help spread weeds.

One particularly fascinating (and concerning) presentation was by Dr Ami Bennett, Laurne White, and Erin Hill on the unintended "genetic rescue" of fallow deer. Where I would have expected isolated populations to suffer from inbreeding and eventual collapse, the researchers suspect deer farming practices—such as the importation of sperm straws and embryos—have contributed to their ongoing success.

The research methods—ranging from faecal pellet counts and camera arrays to thermal drone surveys and tracking plant destruction—were impressively rigorous. The resulting data provided a clear picture of deer movement and population trends.

As someone with strong ties to the land, I particularly connected with the landowners and volunteers who've taken deer control into their own hands. Their collective efforts led to the creation of the *Victorian Deer Control Community Network*, offering support and information sharing across the state. As is often the case, it's passionate local volunteers who step up when government action lags.

Managing deer in peri-urban environments is not just a matter of ecology—it's entangled in legal complexity as well. This forum was a real eye-opener and a timely reminder of the importance of coordinated, informed action.

Judith Sise

Nocturnal Animals Night walks at Braeside Park 2025

April 2025 was the start for the FOBP Night walks again after Daylight savings had ended.

Six participants signed on for April 11th & five FOBP guides for the first April night walk.

Participants all meet first inside the visitor centre, get a safety briefing by the FOBP & learned the history of Braeside Park as to what it was once there a long time ago.

We do go on different walking trails around Braeside Park depending on the number of participants we have including the FOBP guides that are available on the night.

Which Nocturnal animals we will see depends on the night & weather as on some night walks we see a lot & sometimes not many also.

On our first night walk for 2025 we saw Tawny Frogmouths, Common Ringtail & Brushtail possums, Scorpions, Purple Swamp Hens, Micro Bats, and a Fox.

The birds we saw sleeping at night in the Gum & Cypress trees were Sulphur-Crested Cockatoos, Noisy Miners and Red Wattle Birds that we saw were sometimes within hand's reach to touch, not that we would disturb them in their sleep.

We leave from the Visitor centre at 7 pm sharp for 1 hour 30-minute walk & returned to the visitor centre at the conclusion of the night walk to sign off & we were thanked by the participants that came on the night walk & said they would come again with friends & families. Gold coins & notes donations are most welcome to the FOBP.

Bookings are Essential & Numbers Limited for Safety via email:

braesideparkfriends@gmail.com or contact Margaret Hunter on 0417323460.

www.braesideparkfriends.org.au for more information.

David Boldiston

Bird Survey

Bird Survey Report – March 2025

The bird survey was held on Friday 28th March 2025. The group consisted of 6 volunteers. It was very cool when we started, but pleasantly warm by 11am. We surveyed Heathland zones 1, 2, 3 and 4 and Woodland zone 4. We identified (x28) species compared to (x31) species for March 2024.

We observed exceptionally high numbers of Red Wattlebirds (x49) and Rainbow Lorikeets (x47) across the Heathland conservation area. Spotted Pardalotes were abundant (x19) in zone 2. We had sightings of less common birds such as the Golden Whistler, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike and Black-shouldered Kite. We also observed (x6) White-plumed Honeyeaters and (x7) Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. It was lovely to see hon-eyeaters returning to the Heathland as numbers were very low in our summer surveys. Fun fact, we only spotted (x1) Noisy Miner which must be a record. Numbers of these birds are often low in the Heathland, but not this low!

The highlight of the day was observing (x5) Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos flying over zone 4. You can't miss that distinctive chatter. They usually make their home in the park in the cooler months. They are stunning birds, and we hope to see them again soon.

Rosemaree MacLean

Bird Survey Group Leader

Bird Profile – Musk Lorikeet—Glossopsitta-concinna

I have chosen to highlight a beautiful lorikeet seldom spotted in Braeside Park. I'm still waiting to get a clear visual myself, but a friend recently took some great photos of the birds in flowering gums in Parkdale. He described them as "really cute, sometimes squawking madly, then silently nibbling up in amongst the leaves." I hope you enjoy discovering more about these colourful birds. [*Rosemaree MacLean*]



The Musk Lorikeet is a medium-sized, sturdy lorikeet, sometimes seen in large flocks when trees are flowering and often in mixed flocks with other parrots and other birds. Musk lorikeets are gregarious, often mixing with other parrots when feeding. They are active and noisy. The usual contact call is a shrill metallic screech, higher than the Rainbow Lorikeet, in flight and when perched. They constantly chatter when feeding.

This lorikeet is mostly green, with a yellow patch at the side of the breast. It has a bright red forehead and band through the eye to the ear coverts. The crown is blue, with females having less blue than males. In flight, brown flight feathers and the golden tail are revealed. Flight is fast and direct, with short angular wings and a medium-length, pointed to wedge-shaped tail.

Distribution:

Musk Lorikeets are endemic to (only found in) south-eastern Australia, being widespread in eastern New South Wales, all regions of Victoria and in the south-east of South Australia.

Habitat:

Musk Lorikeets are found in tall, open, dry forest and woodlands, dominated by eucalypts and are usually found in the canopy. They are also seen in suburban areas, parks and street trees. They roost or loaf in tall trees away from their feeding sites.

Seasonal movements:

They are considered nomadic, following the flowering or fruiting of food trees and they travel widely for food.

Feeding:

Musk Lorikeets feed in all levels of the canopy and are very active when foraging. They eat mainly pollen and nectar from eucalypts using their specialised brush-tipped tongues, but also eat seeds, fruits and insects and their larvae.

Breeding:

Musk Lorikeets breed in hollow branches and holes in living eucalypts, often near watercourses. The entrance holes are usually very small, so they have to squeeze in. Eggs are laid on a base of chewed or decayed wood. The female incubate the eggs and both parents roost in the hollow at night.

Living with us

Declines in Musk Lorikeet populations have been caused by the clearance of eucalypts for agriculture, but they may benefit from plantings in towns. They do not inhabit logged forest. Some birds may be a pest in or-chards.

Sourced from 'Birds in Backyards' by Rosemaree MacLean



Lorikeet photos by Graham Gill

Editorial

The weather has been unusually dry over the last few months. We have seen the lowest level of water in the wetlands in my memory, even after some rains.

The bird population (and foxes) don't seem to be disturbed much by this and we have followed the Pink eared ducks as they have brought new wonderful life to the park.

The pink eared ducks have been followed closely by many on Facebook and photographed brilliantly by Roger Parker during their growth cycle.

I guess the reason why they have been so popular is due to the lack of other young from the rest of the birds in the park at this time of year.

Winter is approaching and hopefully the promise of more rain.

During the last few weeks Rosemaree and I went for a few walks with a camera to see how the park is fairing. The results follow in the next few pages in no particular order and with no specific message other than life is beautiful. Enjoy.









D MacLean



FOBP Committee Rear - David Boldiston, Simon Flemming, Frank Russo, Margaret Hunter, David MacLean Front - Heather Markland, Rosemaree MacLean, Sofie Mills, Judith Sise, Vicky Paraskevas

Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

President:	Judith Sise
Vice President & Webmaster:	Frank Russo
Secretary:	Margaret Hunter
Assistant Secretary:	Rosemaree MacLean
Treasurer & Newsletter Editor:	David MacLean
Committee members:	David Boldiston, Simon Flemming, Heather Markland , Sophie Mills

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Join us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240/#

Newsletter Contributions

Thank you to all you wonderful people who have contributed to this newsletter . Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Your articles are treated with respect and not changed in content or grammar unless authorised by you or required by law. Some format changes are usually required to fit with the look and feel of this newsletter.

This newsletter is produced bi-monthly for all financial, honorary and Life members of the Friends group <u>who have provided</u> an email address.

Memberships are due on 1st July each year.

If you have an item to share in future editions or have any feedback in relation to this newsletter, please contact the editor at

maclean.david@gmail.com

Friends of Braeside Park

ABN 72 959 503 118 INC NO A00242027B

Membership Application/Renewal Form:

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mail •					
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Renewing Membership		\$15		Family Membership	
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			Dingley Vil	lage, Vic 3172	

http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240 Treasurer contact number 0438 888 601 Secretary contact number 0417 323 460

Community Night Walks for 2025



Braeside Park

The Friends of Braeside Park invite you to attend a night walk to view the nocturnal animals of the park On Friday Nights at 7pm from April thru to September on the 11th April, 2nd May, 6th June, 4th July, 1st August & 5th September Meet at the Visitors Centre Braeside Park, enter @ Lower Dandenong Rd, Braeside Cost: A Gold Coin Donation per person Numbers Limited - Bookings Are Essential Via email: <u>braesideparkfriends@gmail.com</u> or contact Margaret Hunter at 0417323460

www.braesideparkfriends.org.au for more info

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Special Friends Group Activities are held throughout the year at various times. You must register on Parkconnect for these Activities	Community Projects Weekends You can register on Park Connect for this activity	Nightwalks	Bird Survey	Community Waterwatch	Community Nursery	Committee Meeting	Activity	
up Activities are t the year at must register on nese Activities	9am - 12pm, follow the signs	From Visitor's Centre 7pm	8am - 11am 4th Enday Robin Car Park	9:30am - 12pm 2nd Saturday Visitors Cantre	10am - 12pm 1st Saturday & 3rd Sunday	7pm - 9pm 2nd Thursday at the Visitor's Centre	Time/Day	Friend's of Braeside Park Activity Calend
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*	*	11	25	12	5 20	10	April	Park
Autumn Discovery Walk Sunday 18th May 2pm-4pm with afternoon tea	*	2	23	10	3 18	8	May	Act
*	World Environment Day Planting Sunday 2st 9am-12pm	6	27	14	7 22	12	June	ivity
*	National Tree Planting Day Saturday 26th 9am- 12pm	4	25	12	5 20	10	July	Cale
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Spring Discovery Walk Sunday 14th Sept, 2pm-4pm with afternoon tea	*	5	26	13	6 21	11	September	ar for 2025
Breakfast with birds Sunday 12th Red Gum Plicnic Area 7am - 9:30am	*	Nig April Gold Bookin	24	11	4 19	9	October	025
Frog Discovery Night 15th November, 7pm - 9pm @ Vistors Centre	*	Nightwalks offered from April through to September Gold Coln Donation per head Bookings Essential 0417323460	28	8	1 16	13	November	
End of Year Breakup Thursday 1 (th @ Visitors Centre 7pm	*	f from tember ver head 17323460	*	13	6 21	11	December	

Website www.braesideparkfriends.org.au

Email braesideparkfriends@gmail.com

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The Friends of Braeside Park