



# THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

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**Braeside Park**  
470 Lower Dandenong Road,  
Braeside 3195  
Melway Map 88 D8  
Phone: 8427 2027

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*The opinions expressed in this newsletter are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of Parks Victoria or its staff.*

## President's Report

By Judith Sise.

Spring is busting out all over Braeside Park. Despite the blustery, grey days, the wattles are flowering beside the paths. The Black-anther Flax-lilies' buds promise masses of small and delicate purple flowers, and the Showy Bossiaea are covered in yellow flowers. The first of the spring butterflies, Painted Ladies, are out.

Tiny skinks sun-baking on warm rocks and black swans nesting in the wetlands both indicate that the warm weather is on its way. It is not quite the exotic spring bulbs, magnolias or crab apple blossom to be seen around Dingley Village and other bayside suburbs, but the native bushland of Braeside Park has its own special Spring showing. The Friends' Group have a Spring Walk next month through the Heathland - 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1:30pm at the Visitors' Centre. All are welcome!

VicRoads returned to answer the questions about the Mordialloc By-Pass raised at their first meeting with the Park Friends, Men's Shed and community-members. Most were clear, but some questions about light, shade, sound and air pollution are unresolved. A large road with constant traffic next to a Park makes those problems inevitable. Agencies such as the EPA (Victoria's 'Environment Protection Authority') may state that noise and air pollution will be within acceptable standards, but that does not mean they won't affect the Park. There will be changes to its biodiversity - and there will be losses. Builders and government tend only to see human populations as important because bats and birds don't change votes - immediately.

While walking in England this month I saw very few native animals. After eight days of the West Country's moors, coasts and (small) reserves, my tally was: one toad, less than 10 butterflies, as many birds, and a small mob of heathland ponies. After returning, in one walk of Braeside Park I saw: numerous rabbits (Sigh!), one skink, one butterfly, 3 Purple Swamp Hens, 5 Pacific Black Ducks, 3 Coots, 20 Ravens, 6 Sulphur Crested Cockatoos, dozens of Eastern Rosellas and many un-identified birds. These animals were roaming the paths and adjacent land. This was because of the absence presence of dogs. The English's relationship with their dogs is often a joke, which I did not appreciate until I went there. There are "Welcome Doggies" signs and bowls of water on the pavement, and signs reminding owners to pick up after their dogs. But it is the sheer number, most owners seemed to have two or more, and once they enter open land (regardless of the signs) dogs roam freely. There were no birds or small lizards to see in the English countryside.

I feel that we are lucky to be able to see our remaining animals, birds, reptiles and insects because our community walk their dogs in the ample, designated dog parks. With the building of the By-pass, places like Braeside Park will become more important to preserve the little biodiversity left in the ever-growing, consolidating urban sprawl.

If you have an opinion on the By-pass or want to know more, there is a website -

<https://engage.vicroads.vic.gov.au/mordiallocbypass>.

The Minister for Planning, Richard Wynne, has confirmed that an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) will be required for the \$300 million By-pass project. This is good news, but one could remain sceptical until it is seen.

## **Park Activities**

### **Breakfast with the Birds (24th Sep)**

There is nothing quite like rising early in the morning to enjoy the company of others – Braeside Park and its birds – although the weather of Saturday 23 September was not welcoming.

Sixteen of us gathered at the Red Gum stand to meet Ranger Des Lucas, and then to walk through the wetlands. Before leaving the car park we saw a lone Tawny Frogmouth (a nightjar) being inconspicuous in a large gum tree. With umbrellas and light raincoats, down the path, we immediately saw a pair of Red-rumped Parrot perched in a dead tree. A group of Rainbow Lorikeets and Eastern Rosellas could be heard, and then seen swooping passed. At the newly complete bird viewer (Thank you Men's Shed!) we saw the whole wetlands. Bobbing around the edges were Coots, a Black Swan and a pair of Chestnut Teals. In the distance were a couple of Hoary-headed Grebes, and picking over the grasses a Purple Swamp Hen with its lovely long legs.

Following Des, we headed towards the other side of the wetland ponds. It was then that the weather turned. Des pointed out the Blue-billed Ducks, and a swan nesting in the reeds. Then it rained. No, it poured. The birds very wisely disappeared into the trees while we fought the gusty rain. Ranger Des, without raincoat or umbrella, pointed out a pair of Pelicans before lighting the BBQ for breakfast. Meanwhile, Ian and Mary took the group to the Hide from where we saw more Hoary-headed Grebes, Cormorants and a Greater Egret emerging from the vegetation to return to hunting for their breakfasts now that the rain had gone. Fried eggs, bacon and tea beckoned at the lunchroom. Judith Sise

### **Kinder visit to Braeside Park – Mentone Pre-School and Elonera Pre School**

Margaret has hosted several visits to the park as part of the Bush Kinder program in Braeside Park in the last two months including a walk around the Howard Road trail and the tree sculptures and up to the chess board and children's play area which they enjoyed. They loved climbing on the trees and asked if we had some of the animals in the park, as well as seeing some birds in the trees.

With the Mentone Pre-School we were able to enjoy time with the displays in the visitor centre, and looking at the animal displays – including why does Spikey (the echidna) have spikes, how does he eat, and does he walk fast, also why are rabbits a pest in Braeside Park. The fox was the most popular exhibit, as also was other displays with the opportunity to see some of the animals up close.

Following this we had a Fathers day night walk program for this group and had some sightings of the nocturnal animals of the park which delighted both groups and increased their knowledge of the park environment.

### **Parks Connect – Parks Victoria training for friends members**

In September Margaret and Kerrie from Karkarook Park attended training in using Parks Victoria newly created volunteer webpage/ and group profile page for groups and parks volunteers. This was a very useful session on using this, which will include notification of events run by the friends on their profile site, and notification of volunteer opportunities in Parks Victoria parks for members of the friends to participate in. It is well worth a look, and you can even create an individual profile for volunteers to take part in a wide range of Parks Victoria activities across the network. It is planned to operate more fully in 2018.

## Night Walk Program

The Friends night walk program continues to be very popular with regular bookings and return visits by many people from previous years and groups. The Friends since the April walk, have run monthly walks with average attendances of 15 people and a number of extra walks and group bookings.

We had a walk with the Kingston U3A, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sandringham Cubs, the Mentone Pre-School and other group night walks planned for later in the year. Participants have ranged from family groups, to adults, and residents from a range of areas some a long distance from Braeside Park. The Friends thank you for your attendance at this program and appreciate your support. We use infra red torches to spot the animals, and have seen many possums, some with babies, rabbits, foxes, eels, feral cats, and a number of birds including lorikeets, and doves. A highlight was when I turned on the infra torch in the visitor centre car park to find six possums in the trees noisily eating away quite contently unaware of the people in the car park. The children and adults were extremely excited while the possums kept on eating.

Areas we have covered include the trail to the duck pond, the res gum trail, the full racecourse trail, and the cypress drive. Part of our role is to record our sightings so that these can be recorded for wildlife monitoring. Many thanks to my dedicated and generous tour guides for 2017 – Margaret Hunter, Bev Bancroft, Judith Sise, Frank Russo, David Boldiston, David Maclean and Rosemaree Maclean. You are a wonderful group to work with, having a passion for Braeside Park and the willingness to make people on the walks aware of the park environment.

Lastly, a big thank you to the nocturnal animals of Braeside Park for your wonderful show again, and willingness to highlight the natural environment of Braeside Park. Some of the photos in the newsletter in 2017 have been taken on the night walks including scorpions, possums, tawny frogmouths, and others.

The Friends are always looking for park guides for night walks and other activities, please contact the friends on [braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com) if you are interested in this role.

## Ranger Ernie

It is only once in a lifetime that you reach a milestone of achieving 40 years of service for an Organisation. Recently Ernie De Marchi achieved this milestone.



Congratulations from Staff, Volunteers & Friends of Braeside Park.

## **ERNIE'S "A" TEAM - WEDNESDAYS:**

### **DINGLEY WATER WAY**

Revegetation has started for the new Melbourne Water Grant with the planting of 900 plants.

### **GRASSLANDS**

Weeding has continued. Also planting of 500+ grasses – Danthonia & Themeda.

### **FRAMES & GUARDS**

Frames & guards have been collected from previous plantings on the Howard Road area & the Wetlands.

### **MULCHING**

Another favourite – Car Park 2, mulch distributed & raked. Looks Good.

Wednesdays 9 am - 12 noon

Meet at the lunch room - Park Office

Morning tea provided

Wednesday afternoons continue 1:00 – 2:30 pm in the Propagation Area.

*Join in the activities with Parks Victoria Rangers  
every Wednesday from 9 am - 12 noon  
- meet at the Park Office  
- morning tea provided*

*Help is needed for a variety of jobs - everyone most welcome.  
Wednesday afternoons continue  
from 1 pm - 3 pm in the Nursery & Community Garden.  
Everyone Most Welcome*

## **Newsletter Contributions**

Thank you to Margaret Hunter, Judith Sise, Bev Bancroft, David MacLean & Park Staff for this months contributions

If you have an item to share in future editions or have any feedback in relation to the newsletter, please contact the editor at [braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com)

## Memories of Tom Drenen

Tom Drenen, a member of the Friends of Braeside Park for eleven years, and passionate advocate for Braeside Park passed away recently, and his funeral was held recently at St Louis De Montfort's Church at Aspendale where he was a parishioner for many years. He had recently moved into a retirement home, having lived in Aspendale for some years.

Tom and his wife Mary were regular attendees at our Friends functions and events and especially the Annual General Meetings, where he had a passionate interest in the proceedings and the guest speaker on whatever topic they were talking on. He rode a bicycle for many years, while caring for Mary who needed assistance and care. He was a member of Ernie's A Team, and was involved in their weeding/planting and other activities on a regular basis. He also participated in Des's mystery walks and the spring walks to maintain his passion for Braeside Park and the work of the Friends. His trademark broad brimmed hat was always on his head serving a useful and practical purpose, and serving as an icon for him. Thank you Tom for your passion for Braeside Park, you will be well remembered by the Friends for your contribution.

VALE

## News

### Waterwatch

Park Staff are looking to the friends to take full ownership of this program. Lachlan to run with assistance of Uni students, friends and supervision from Park Staff

### Visitor Centre Upgrade

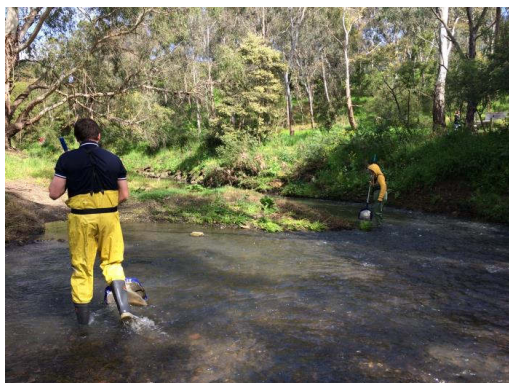
The Rangers propose some changes to the visitor centre for the purpose of making the centre more inviting, engaging and welcoming to increase visitation numbers.

### Replacement of Cypress Trees

Replacement trees have been purchased and are ready for the next planting day.

### Heathland Fire Breaks

There has been extensive work undertaken throughout the Heathland to ensure fire breaks meet fire fighting access standards.



Margaret and Lachlan attended Waterbug Census training.  
Lachlan can be seen in waders kick sampling.

## Birds of Braeside Park

Photos by David MacLean



## Friends of Braeside Park—Activity Calendar

### Weekday Community Project-The A Team:

Every Wednesday with Ranger staff commencing at 9:00 - 12:00 from the Park Office. Activities can include weeding, mowing weeds, mulching, planting, fencing etc.

### Nursery - Plant Propagation:

1st Saturday and 3rd Sunday from 10:00 am to 12:00 Noon and  
Every Wednesday 1pm to 3pm  
Undertaking a variety of propagation activities.

### Committee Meeting:

2nd Thursday, monthly 7:00 to 9:00pm at the Park Office.  
The Committee meets to make decisions about the running of the group.

### Water Quality Monitoring:

3rd Tuesday, monthly 9:00 to 12:00 noon from the Park Office.  
Water samples are taken and monitored from the Dingley Waterway and Wetland.

### Bird Observations:

A set bird observation is completed monthly around the main wetland.  
Call Ranger Janelle Cadd on (03) 8427 2027 to become part of this program.

### Birds Australia Monitoring Program:

10 bird monitoring transects are monitored in this program with 5 completed one month and the other 5 the next month.  
The sessions occur on the 4th Friday of each month from 8:00 am alternating between the following starting locations.  
Park Office January, March, May, July, September, November  
Robin Car Park February, April, June, August, October, December

### Special Activities:

Night walks are offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation.  
For details and bookings phone 0417 323 460

**Community Nursery is Open on the Third Sunday of the Month  
10:00 am to 12:00 noon – Seedlings \$2.00 each.**

### Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

**President:** Judith Sise **Secretary:** Margaret Hunter  
**Assistant Secretary:** Rosemaree MacLean **Treasurer:** Bev Bancroft  
**Newsletter Editor:** David MacLean **Webmaster:** Frank Russo  
**Publicity Officer:** Vacant

**Postal Address:** PO Box 608 Braeside, Vic. 3195 **Phone:** 0417 323 460

**Email:** braesideparkfriends@gmail.com

**Web:** [www.braesideparkfriends.org.au](http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au)

**ACN:** A 002 4027 B

Join us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240/#>

Current Facebook Members = 118



# **The Friends of Braeside Park**

## **Invite you to a Twilight Photography Walk**



**When: Friday 20th October 2017  
7:00 - 8:30 pm**

**Meet at Visitor Centre Car Park after entering the  
park from Lower Dandenong Road**

**Melway Map Ref 88 - D8**

**What to bring: Good camera, torch, patience, sturdy  
footwear, etc.**

**Limited numbers**

**Contact David MacLean on 0438 888 601 or email  
[braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com)**

## **The Friends of Braeside Park**

**Invite you to the Spring Walk**

**The Wedding Bush & other native plants are in flower**



**When: Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
1:00 - 3:30 afternoon tea supplied**

**Meet at the Visitor Centre after entering the park from Lower Dandenong Road**

**Melway Map Reference 88 - D8**

**What to Bring: Camera, binoculars, sturdy footwear etc**

**All Welcome**

*The watermark on this paper depicts the emblem of the Friends Group - The Wedding Bush (Ricinocarpos pinifolius)*