



## THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK

# NEWSLETTER

### Contents

- From the President 2
- The Friends of the Park 3
- Celebrating our History 5
- Park Activity 7
- Selected Photos 10
- Park Info 12
- Membership Form 13



**Braeside Park**  
470 Lower Dandenong Road,  
Braeside 3195  
Phone: 8427 2027

**Friends of Braeside Park**  
PO Box 608



Healthy Parks  
Healthy People®



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

## From the President

### President's Annual Report

September 2021

While walking in Braeside Park, you notice the density of trees – Coastal Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus pryoriana*), Coastal Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*), Lightwood (*Acacia implexia*), Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*), Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*), Prickly wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*), Paperbarks (*Melaleucas*), and the iconic River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) to name the more common.

The surrounding suburbs have trees. In fact, many compared to the tree coverage of neighbouring municipality Greater Dandenong where tree coverage is one of the lowest in the South East. Along the nature strips and growing in front and back yards, there are ornamental, fruit and some native trees. However, we all know that back and front yards are shrinking or disappearing. We have all seen brick family houses with front and back gardens of low shrubs and one or two larger trees replaced with townhouses or one big cement box with a small rectangle of grass or allegedly artistic succulents at the front. The rest of the block is covered either the same or cemented for cars. Does it matter? Of course, it matters.

We all know that trees provide oxygen, shade, homes for the birds and possums, and are nicer to see than cement. A google will bring up hundreds of reasons why we, human being lifeforms, need trees for our health, our communities, our happiness, our natural world, our economy, our property values, and our future. *I don't think there are many reasons why trees need us! They were here first, back when they were making all of those fossil fuels and being homes for the first primates.* It is strange how many people like trees in Braeside Park but not on their property or on their streets. Once, the first thing a person did on acquiring a home was to plant a fruit tree, usually lemon. Now, it appears that the first thing is to remove the trees because the tree might drop a branch or leaves.

The original trees in Braeside Park are very few and very old. Most of the trees were propagated and planted by The Friends Group around 30 years ago. They are much appreciated by all who visit, but tree canopy on public land, such as the Park, is less than one-third of the suburban landscape. Two-thirds is privately owned and that is where the trees are needed.

Amazingly, many owners have fits if any law is suggested to boost or just to maintain vegetation on private land for the health and well-being of us all stacked together here in Melbourne. This is surprising because the same people grumble about others not wearing masks and keeping their social distance, etc during the Pandemic for the common good. The maintenance of appropriate trees and shrubs on private land is vital to combat Climate Change compared to which Covid is temporary. "Finland is officially the world's happiest country. It is also 75 per cent forest. I believe these facts are related." (*Matt Haig*) Australia is the 10<sup>th</sup> happiest. Do you think that we are all going to leave this Pandemic happier than we entered? Plant an appropriate tree and whenever we finally get released, join The Friends planting trees in Braeside Park.

**Judith Sise**

## The Friends of Braeside Park

We are still unable to leave metropolitan Melbourne, but the expanded, 15km radius now offers me walks beyond Braeside Park - which is a freedom I can't resist.

I measured the distance, put on a mask, and set off to spot birds at Mordialloc Creek, Patterson River and Edithvale Seaford Wetlands trails. Lots of other people did likewise, but not necessarily masked nor following the rules for dogs on leads. It's strange. Many dog owners carry that leash along the trails as their dog(s) runs ahead of them, or into the water to chase birds. When the trail ends, and there is a road, then Fido goes on the leash.

If I remind dog owners that they are on an on-leash trail, and that there are nesting birds, then they either choose to ignore me, or inform me that their dog is well behaved and they have been walking here for years and tell me to have a nice day! (You know! Like those people who tell you that they are good drivers who shouldn't have speed-limits!)

But, I have to write that in contrast the Kingston Council Officers whose job it is to follow up reports about these selfish, foolish pet-owners (and their dogs) do respond courteously promptly. They have heard it all as well, apart from: "Sorry, I will put the leash on immediately". The favourite is: "I pay rates!" (which I guess means to them that you're then allowed to break local rules? Perhaps "I pay taxes!" then means that you can then commit crimes?)

Please Parks Victoria, never allow dogs in Braeside Park! Think of the terror that would be inflicted on the wetland birds, lizards and echidnas. You cannot see any of these creatures outside Braeside Park because of irresponsible dog owners and a few other factors.

During these walks, I was interested how residents expand their property beyond their back fences. (Perhaps, because they pay rates?) There were mown, minute footy fields complete with goal posts, bike jumps, fruit trees and a prickly pear patch! Now prickly pear is fast-growing, impossibly hardy, invasive and controlled weed in Victoria. Further along, there were prickly pear cuttings dumped. (By a rate payer? feeling that they hadn't had their money's worth?) Thank you to Andrew, a Kingston Council's Parks & Reserves' Officer, who was on the job searching for the Prickly Pear patch. There are no prickly pears in Braeside Park, but there are patches to be seen in some gardens in Dingley Village.

**The majority of Australia's controlled weeds were deliberately introduced, and then escaped from gardens doing terrible damage to our natural environment.** The highly toxic and very invasive, white arum lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) is spread by bird droppings and stormwater. It is established in parts of Braeside Park. Covid 19 has put on hold the Friends of Braeside Park volunteers, especially the Wednesday Group, who used to spend many hours weeding in the Park to maintain this public treasure, without even thinking about rates!

Many of the pretty flowers that grow in our Dingley gardens such as Agapanthus, Nasturtiums, Morning Glory, Sweet Pittosporum and Freesias, can escape into the Park. If you think weeding is a pain in a suburban plot, try weeding 295 hectares! Walking those other trails made me appreciate the Kingston Council's Parks Officers who vegetate and maintain these indigenous riparian ecosystems along the creeks and waterways. And, I did spot lots of birds but not as many as I do in Braeside Park!

Walking these trails reminded me why Braeside Park and other connecting Green Wedge reserves and open spaces, such as the Kingswood Golf Course, are worth protecting from weeds, cats, dogs, rabbits, foxes, property developers, and superannuation funds.

Once the restrictions lift, consider spending Wednesday morning assisting the Rangers and other volunteers planting, weeding and restoring our unique indigenous Park.

**Judith Sise**

## **The Friends of Braeside Park (cont.)**

### **Friends Activities in 2022**

The Friends group activities have been on hold, due to Covid restrictions in 2020-21 except for a short period. We were able to get some limited activities in on our night walk program and the Clean Up Australia activity, with good attendances. It is planned to take expressions of interest from seniors in November/December 2021 for planned walks including a daylight saving walk based on numbers available with further ones planned for 2022. These will be run with available volunteers.

If you are interested in helping the friends run these activities, please contact the secretary for further information. You may also have an idea for new activities.

***Margaret Hunter***

### **Friends of Braeside Park Annual General Meeting 8 August 2021**

The Friends of Braeside Park held their Annual General Meeting on 8 August online with the committee members agreeing, for the second year to continue in their roles. The Friend's Committee is always looking for new committee members with an interest in contributing to the management of the group. This gives members a new perspective on the workings of the committee, an involvement in organizing current and new Friends' activities, and mentoring for future environmental career involvement.

We are also always looking for new activity volunteers with several projects re- starting in 2022 including nursery and propagation, tour guiding, night walks, involvement in archiving and recording the Friends' archives, and other new activities planned for post Covid in 2022.

The committee meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7.00 pm except January, currently on zoom but planned for face to face when possible. Please contact the secretary for further information on this opportunity to add to your Braeside Park experience and contribute to the future development of the Friends' group.

Please contact us on [braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com) for more information or call 0417 323 460.

***Margaret Hunter***

### **The Mordialloc Freeway**

The Mordialloc Freeway, on the western boundary of Braeside Park, is now rapidly nearing completion with the signage in place to direct motorists to the freeway at both Centre Dandenong Road, Lower Dandenong Road and Governor Road to access the park environment. The other access is from the shared pathway alongside the freeway, and from the pedestrian underpass from Parkway (Woodlands Industrial Estate).

The Bridge over the Waterways Estate, a suburb in the City of Kingston, is 400 metres long, and links the freeway to the Mornington Peninsula Freeway at Springvale Road. The freeway route in this location, takes the raised road, with future vegetation plantings over the former sewerage ponds of the Braeside Treatment Plant. The heritage buildings, in the Park Depot location, have been saved from the original route of the freeway, and form the Park Depot for the Parks Victoria ranger staff in 2021.

## **The Friends of Braeside Park (cont.)**

We encourage you to learn about the early history of Braeside Park, before it became a recreational open space in 1989, and value and treasure its precious and special environment. The Heathland area, with special access, was fenced in 1976 and is now open to restricted access which makes the experience more worthwhile and valued.

The Friends' group will be liaising with the Department of Transport (formerly Vic Roads) to manage the impact of the freeway on Braeside Park, ongoing, a recent addition being the bird hide, a legacy of the MRPV and important observation area of park visitors.

***Margaret Hunter***

## **Celebrating our History**

**Merle Mitchell OAM**

(15 -07-1934 to 20-09-2021)

Readers of this newsletter will be aware of the sad death of our foundation President, Eric Mitchell in August 2016, and we are sad to report the recent passing of his wife Merle Mitchell AM in September 2021.

Merle's contribution to the Friends group and the community is best summarized in the Dandenong Star Journal of Tuesday 28 September 2021, recorded as 'One of a Kind.'

Merle was 87 and is being remembered by many in the wider community -as a true leader – one who nurtured Greater Dandenong's community and was a voice for thousands otherwise unheard. Merle was a former CEO of ACOSS, and involved in a large number of organisations in Greater Dandenong and its former entity – the City of Springvale. She continued her involvement in 'social' issues by involvement in the Aged Care Commission in 2019. She will be sadly missed by many, including the committee and members of the Friends of Braeside Park, Parks Victoria and many community organisations.

While Merle's contribution to Friends of Braeside Park was in the early years, it is apparent that her legacy will live on in my mind and others. Foundation member, Jan Holt, remembers the request from Eric Mitchell to sew a pelican suit for the Park Celebration, quite a big job. Her response was that she was happy to sew a tea towel but a pelican suit was a big ask. The suit was done and is in the photos at the Visitor Centre. Merle's contribution will be remembered by many with gratitude and fondness.



My own memories are as a young Friends member, later President for 9 years then Secretary, and her strong support despite a recent hearing issue, and hearing aids, a recent acquisition. I was able to take on this lifechanging role and 'learn' on the job. 15 years later I still remember this. Eric and Merle were the pioneers in environment groups in the 1980's and 90's, when there was less awareness of the environment, less technology, and the need to work with the community to expand the friends network. Networking was their passion before it was fashionable.



## The Friends of Braeside Park (cont.)

### Celebrating our History (cont.)

In later years, Merle was passionate to pass on her knowledge and contribute through a number of zoom presentations in recent years, with the same passion and commitment. Merle was always 'up for a chat' with a wide smile, and it was always worth the time; we both learnt something about life during these chats. The contribution of Eric for over 16 years and Merle is an important part of the work of the Friends group over the last 30 plus years.

Merle doubtless assisted Eric as newsletter editor for 16 years, and in other roles. The Friends of Braeside Park as the group they are today due to the commitment of both Merle and Eric. If you have other memories of the Merle you would like to add to the Friends' archives, please let us know for the Friends' history project planned in 2022.



### Reluctant hero

*Eric Mitchell, was awarded a Best Friend Award for his contribution to the Friends of Braeside Park in 2006, with the following comments sourced from the Source Magazine (Melbourne Water Issue 40 December 2006.)*

Community stalwart Eric Mitchell was quite grumpy about winning a Best Friends Award for 2006. "I got something back for everyone else's hard work," he says.

But Mr Mitchell, 78, was indeed a worthy winner of the award, one of three presented recently at the annual Victorian Environment Friends Network seminar hosted by Melbourne Water at the Western Treatment Plant.



The former Springvale mayor and schoolteacher played an important part in establishing the 300-hectare Braeside Park and its Friends group in the late 1980s. He drove many successful grant applications. These led to the development of a community nursery – which produces about 15,000 indigenous seedlings a year to revegetate the park – and various works to improve the park's wetlands, including viewing platforms and extensive plantings.

A colleague, Bev Bancroft, said Mr Mitchell was a quiet man who always knew the right way of doing things. "He is a good teacher who is effective but undemonstrative," she said.

Both Eric and Merle made major and significant contributions to the Friends, which we hope to celebrate with the future publication of the history of the Friends of Braeside Park. Their legacy is permanent and valued.

**Margaret Hunter**

## Park Activity

### Golf SAC – Kingswood - Notice of second Directions Hearing

I attended the Zoom meeting for the Second Directions Hearing. This was to establish the timetable for the hearing proper.

Matters were raised by: The Dingley Village Association, Save Kingswood Group, and the Counsel for Kingston Council. These included:

- rescheduling of the dates for the hearings,
- procedural fairness by the Advisory Committee,
- visits to the site by Counsel and community groups

It was an interesting meeting. I was most surprised to learn that this meeting was not recorded nor minuted. The Committee, counsel, and community members all had to make their own notes!

Most of the three and half hours were spent deciding the timetable for the later, substantial hearings. This hinged upon access to the Golf Course site itself for the Council's experts.

Counsel for the Proponent (Paul Connor) listed dates offering access but "the Council/Counsel for Council" had (a) failed to respond and (b) some of the experts had visited the site in the past.

Counsel for Kingston Council (Matthew Townsend) pointed out there were now Covid regulations.

Mr. Connor suggested that such a "literal" interpretation of the regulations could be overcome by taking the inspection as part of daily exercise. Also, that the Counsel for Kingston could start without new experts' reports, and the City may not be engaging with the case.

After much polite sparring and a short break to confer, the dates were finally set: except for possible other cases or holidays.

Hearings will begin in mid-November, and finish just before Christmas – perfect for reporting in January during sports fixtures or holidays.

Then the community groups' leaders expressed their concerns regarding the lack of consultation by Australian Superannuation (beyond this Committee), ostensible conflicts of interest by one of the Committee's members (Gabby McMillan has been recused after quite a bit of discussion) and how to arrange visits to the site (the Proponent's permitting).

That took three hours and a half, including one 20-minute break.

So, what did I learn from this? Well, the Chairman confirmed that the hearing was all about the rezoning, which is what I will put into The Friends of Braeside Park's submission.

*Judith Sise*

### Kingston Residents Association Annual General Meeting Guest Speaker

Dr. Ian Woodcock was the guest speaker at The Kingston Residents Association's AGM recently. Dr. Ian Woodcock is Director of Architecture and Urban Design at Swinburne University of Technology. Ian is the designer who made the phrase 'sky-rail' a household term in Melbourne. With over 30 years of experience in teaching, research, and practice, Ian has worked with community, government, and private sector clients and industry partners. Ian provided a brief presentation surrounding the Parkdale level crossing removal and spoke briefly about the works of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project. Basically, he said community groups can campaign against the SRL but it would be better to suggest how to mitigate the structure. His belief is that engineers and Governments rarely change their plans.

The Friends of Braeside Park could have advised that and added "*Working with the Major Roads Projects Victoria MRPV will eat up your time for very little return. However, The Friends would like to think that Margaret Hunter, the Friends' representative on the Reference Committee of the MRPV for two years, and Judith Sise, one year on the same committee, managed to get the Freeway moved to avoid demolition of the Rangers' lunchroom but in reality it was probably Parks Victoria's lobbying that achieved this minor mitigation. The Friends received via The Dingley Men's Shed a small bus-stop style bird hide and a cement slab awaiting corrections.*"

## Park Activity

### Kingston Residents Association Annual General Meeting Guest Speaker (cont.)

The chats revealed yet again the community disenchantment with politicians, public servants and democracy in general. "At the heart of this is the erosion of our democracy" and "our local member could not give a hoot about us". I put into the chat the question "*Why does sporting fields always take priority over biodiversity?*" No response! Interestingly, I listened for one and half hours and left with one sentence of notes.

*Judith Sise*

### Bits and Bytes

- Friends activities to recommence soon when we digest the new Covid-normal world and how it applies to us.
- Park visitations at an all time high with figures to exceed last years 820,000 visitors.
- Electronic lodgement and tracking of all friends activity (through Park Connect) to be part of life in the future.
- Duck population healthy with new generations of Pink Eared, Wood, Black ducks and Swans (I know, Swans are not ducks, but they are cute nonetheless).
- Facebook page exhibiting some very exciting and beautiful photos of park residents (see latter section). Thank you to all photographers out there for your wonderful contributions. Please keep on clicking.
- Still too many rabbits.
- Sound wall installation between freeway and Park almost complete. Hope it works!

*David MacLean*

### Improvement works announced for Braeside Park as part of the Urban Parks Active Wellbeing Program!

The Victorian Government has committed \$21 million for the Urban Parks Active Wellbeing program to deliver vital facility upgrades in 21 parks across Melbourne.

This includes funding for upgrades at Braeside Park, with works including upgrades to toilet facilities, picnic tables, drinking fountains, BBQs and signage due to start in October 2021 for the Telford Picnic Area.

Upgrading and replacing these facilities at Braeside Park will provide enhanced recreational activities for more people to enjoy, while facilitating active recreation in parks.

- Early works will commence in October 2021 at Telford Picnic Area, including toilet upgrades, new picnic tables, new signage, replacement of some drinking fountains and upgraded BBQs.
- Works at Telford Picnic Area will be completed by the end of 2021.
- Further works at Braeside will provide upgrades at Red Gum Picnic Area and the two bridges on Red Gum Trail.

While these works are in progress, some temporary restrictions may apply to some parts of Telford Picnic Area, including the toilet block. Signage on site will advise what facilities are unavailable.



## Park Activity

### Things that go bump in the night

It appears that when ever we have a lockdown (can only speak about the last 5 or 6 due to Covid-19) strange activity begins.

Bits of wood are attracted to each other in a strange triangular fashion - you could say a bit like a shelter, but these shelters are very small, so it



may be Leprechauns.

Last week I saw a family trying to put a few of these bits of old branches together, but you



could see that it was not working. They did not



have a degree in structural engineering.

So, who or what is responsible for these magnificent structures?

(yes some are magnificent and very elaborate).

Someone suggested that it was pre-school children. These children are obviously very strong, as some of these branches would weigh in excess of 20 kg and are sometimes 3mtrs or more in length.

I don't think it is little children, but then who or what builds these structures during Covid lockdowns?

Who knows.....



**David MacLean**



## Park Activity

Following are selected photos from The Friends Facebook page

(selected by Rosemaree MacLean - administrator)

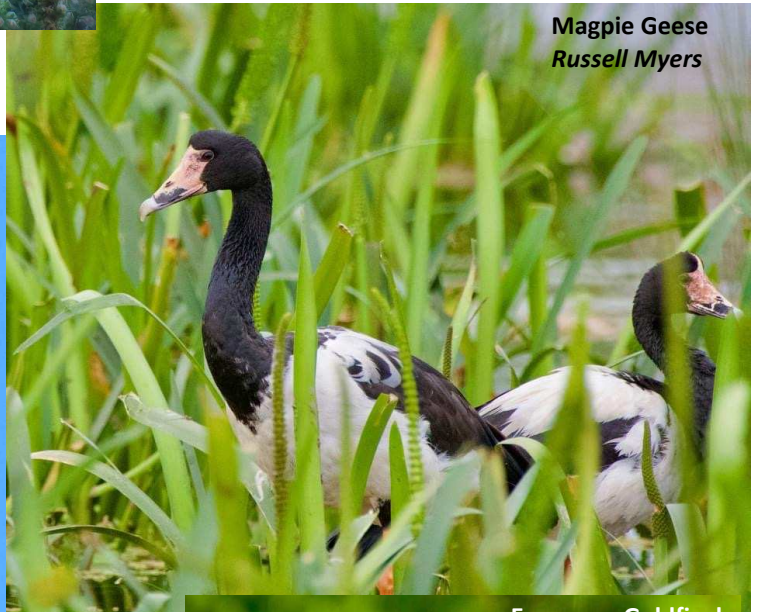
New Holland Honeyeaters  
Heather Markland



Peregrine Falcon  
Feather as a Light



Magpie Geese  
Russell Myers



Nankeen Kestrel  
Russell Myers



European Goldfinch  
Russell Myers



Great Egret  
Lecheng Zhou





## Park Activity

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo  
Russell Myers



Red Wattlebird and chick  
Lecheng Zhou



Noisy Miner  
Lecheng Zhou



Copperhead Snake  
Helen Forrester



Welcome Swallows  
Russell Myers



## Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

**President:** Judith Sise  
**Secretary:** Margaret Hunter  
**Assistant Secretary:** Rosemaree MacLean  
**Treasurer:** Helen Russo  
**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](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com)

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

**ACN:** A 002 4027 B



**FOBP Committee**

Frank Russo, Judith Sise, Helen Russo, Rosemaree MacLean,  
David MacLean, Margaret Hunter, David Boldiston

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

### Newsletter Contributions

Thank you to Judith Sise, Margaret Hunter, Rosemaree MacLean and David MacLean for their contributions to this edition.

We thank the many contributors to our Facebook page for their excellent photos and stories.

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

[de\\_edfobp@iinet.net.au](mailto:de_edfobp@iinet.net.au)  
or [braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com)

### Editor's Note

This newsletter is being distributed to financial members and affiliated groups.

As Covid-19 Lockdowns start to be forgotten, we look forward to resuming our activities in the near future. In future editions I hope to include the activities calendar as well as more information of what is on and when. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this newsletter and hope to see you in the Park soon.

If you have something to say or some beautiful picture or story to share, please send it to me for evaluation and possible inclusion in the next newsletter. We welcome input from all our friends.

**David MacLean**  
[de\\_edfobp@iinet.net.au](mailto:de_edfobp@iinet.net.au)



**Friends of Braeside Park**  
**ABN 72 959 503 118 INC NO A00242027B**

**Membership Renewal/Application Form:**

I/We wish to become/renew our membership of the FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK INC  
(No joining fee)

Membership types:

Corporate	\$20
Family	\$15
Ordinary Member	\$10
Student Member	\$5
Organisation Member	\$15
Concession/Pensioner	\$5

DONATION: \$.....

**Personal Details**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Interests: \_\_\_\_\_  
Membership Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Payments can be made into our Bendigo bank account –

BSB: 633 000

Account: 155348246 Include family name in description

Then mail or email this form to either of the following:

Mail to: The Treasurer, Friends of Braeside Park. PO Box 608,  
Braeside Victoria 3195

Or Email to: [braesideparkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:braesideparkfriends@gmail.com)

Further information on the Friends' activities are available on our website and our Facebook page.

<http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au>

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

Secretary contact number 0417 323 460

Friends of Braeside Park Renewal Membership form November 2021



Members receive by email our newsletter and other information on the work of the Friends. Our activity calendar is also available in Braeside Park and on our website. The Friends of Braeside Park use personal information only for Friends activities and the management of Braeside Park.

Helen Russo (Treasurer), Margaret Hunter (Secretary)

**The Purposes of the Friends of Braeside Park are as follows:**

TO PROMOTE the use and enjoyment of the Park by the community

TO ENCOURAGE community awareness and understanding of the Park by education and direct hands on experiences

TO SUPPORT the protection, conservation, and environmentally sensitive development of the Park for the benefit of present and future generations

TO ASSIST Park staff in the enhancement of the environment and development of facilities

TO PUBLISH material for educational and informational purposes related to the features and environment of the Park

TO CO-OPERATE and undertake joint activities with other organisations with similar purposes

TO RAISE, MANAGE AND SPEND FUNDS for financing suitable projects in the Park

TO FORM specific activity groups within the Park to manage and organise specific projects

At present interest groups include:

Indigenous seed collection and seedling preparation

Bird observation and recording

Water Watch, water quality monitoring

Project days, focusing on an outcome

Ground water bore monitoring

Community (Indigenous Plant) Garden

Friends of Braeside Park Renewal Membership form November 2021