

PO Box  
19  
Churchill  
3842



President:  
5122 3137

# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – June 2009*

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeon.net>

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1. G'day everyone and welcome to the latest edition of your newsletter. May turned out to be surprisingly dry at our place, only a few millimetres ending up in the gauge despite the weather reports, the threatening skies and the good falls elsewhere around the state. Usually no rain at this time of year means frost in the mornings, but we escaped the annoyance of having to remove the white covering from the vehicles before we could start our day as well. That's not to say it isn't cold, just not that cold! As I write the rain is drumming on the roof and the weather reports are predicting snowfalls to low levels, so I hope there is a bit in it this time.

### **June Activity**

Tree planting is back on our calendar after a long absence! Hopefully we will have some trees to plant! Rob tells me that the GEST nursery in Moe has been given some seed from our supplies to raise for us, so if all goes well there will be enough ready to keep us busy filling in the gaps along Billys Creek. We will be concentrating on the areas where our planting efforts in the past have not been successful, so to that end we will meet at the Junction Road gate at 10am on Sunday, June 21. Be prepared with your lunch, refreshments and any tools you think might be useful and wear clothing and footwear suitable for the environment and weather conditions on the day.

### **Kookaburra Individual Environmental Award 2009**

Did you all see the very nice article and photograph in the LV Express a couple of weeks ago? If you missed it, here is the story.....

On Saturday, May 16, the day before our May activity, Cathy, Wendy and I accompanied Ken to the Sky High Restaurant on Mt Dandenong for the presentation of the Parks Victoria 2009 Kookaburra Awards. Ken had been nominated by colleagues in the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists for his efforts in Morwell NP. The day began cold and wet as Cathy and I made our way to Ken's place, then we headed for the hills, gathering Wendy up on the way. It continued to rain for most of the trip, but cleared up when we reached the heights of Mt Dandenong. It didn't warm up though, the breeze was extremely lazy, going through us rather than around, making it far too uncomfortable to remain outside admiring the view over the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. As we were a little early, the hosts weren't ready for us yet, so we took refuge in the café, enjoying the warmth of the surroundings and a morning cuppa.

At 1030am we made our way to the restaurant, found a suitable table to park ourselves at and did a bit of socialising and networking while waiting for the presentations to start. The award that Ken had been nominated for, "The Kookaburra Individual Environmental Award for quality environmental work making a sustainable improvement in parks", was the first award presented and turned out to be a choice between two nominees, with Ken being successful! The remainder of the ceremony involved handing out awards in about eight other categories, some of which had up to a dozen nominees. Following that, we were treated to a lovely smorgasbord lunch to prepare us for the afternoon activities.



Another benefit of our attendance at the award presentation was free entry to the nearby William Ricketts Sanctuary and the National Rhododendron Gardens. We thought we may as well take advantage of the offer while we were there, so off we went for a stroll around the Dandenongs. The William Ricketts Sanctuary involved a short walk through the cool temperate rainforest admiring all the sculptures placed at intervals among the shrubbery, but the Rhododendron Gardens were much larger and a three kilometre walk was needed to view most of what was on offer. From my point of view, most of the plants were weeds, but there were sections with some good Aussie plants on display, it wasn't all Rhododendrons!

The trip home was relatively uneventful, although due to our excursions we didn't arrive back in Churchill until after dark. We were surprised that it was still wet and dreary at home, the weather had been kind to us in the Dandenongs. A bit of a saga ensued as a result, as reversing out of Ken's driveway in the dark saw me parked in the ditch and not going anywhere. After the obligatory ribbing and the use of a few bricks and boards from Ken's garage, we managed to extract ourselves from the predicament and called it a day.



### **Weed Wars: Episode XXIII** **May Activity Report**

The weather was still dreary the next morning as we met at the Kerry Road car park at 10am on Sunday, May 17. Rob, Ken, Darren, Beryl, Reg, Peter and Laura joined Cathy and I at the appointed time. Firstly we all had a look at Ken's Kookaburra Award and then we headed for the Jumbuk Road site of our activity for the day in the three 4WD's.

The drizzle really set in as we commenced working along the roadside verge, alongside where the pines had been removed; pulling out stray pine seedlings, pittosporums and any other weed we came across. Anything small that could be entirely pulled out was extracted, larger plants were cut with loppers or bow saws and painted with Round-up and the really big ones were dealt with by Rob and the chainsaw. Even the axe was given a work-out in areas that couldn't be easily accessed with the chainsaw, such as the steep banks on the roadside. In the end, only two pines defeated us: one was too big for the chainsaw and too close to the overhead powerline and the other was too close to the road and tangled up with surrounding vegetation, making it too risky to fell with any precision.

Some interesting observations for the day: the Lyrebird singing its heart out in the drizzle first thing in the morning; three Koalas sighted, the first as far out on a flimsy little branch as it could get, the other two together in the same tree; the Asparagus Fern that was found and removed from the roadside, obviously a garden escapee; the Bat's Wing Fern found at the top of the hill where you wouldn't expect it to be, the first record in the Park for a number of years.

While Darren, Cathy and I struggled with some big pittosporums on the steep roadsides, the rest of the crew worked around the perimeter of the logged pines. Towards the end of the day Peter came back to report that Laura had fallen over and cut her hand with some secateurs, so action stations were called. Reg drove back with Peter and the first aid kit to deal with the wound, while the rest of us finished off our chores and readied ourselves for departure. In the end, Reg drove Laura home while Cathy drove Laura's car home and I followed. Laura was going to head for casualty with her family to get her cut checked professionally while the rest of us headed for home. Meanwhile, the Roulette's were putting on an aerobatic display in the skies to the east of Morwell, making it difficult to concentrate on driving!

**Friends of Morwell National Park Inc: PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842, <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>.**

**President:** Ken Harris, 51223137,

**Vice-President:** Darren Hodgson,

**Secretary:** Beryl Nelson,

**Treasurer:** Wendy Steenberg,

**Newsletter Editor:** Mike Beamish, PO Box 112, Boolarra, 3870, 51696543, beamish@vic.australis.com.au

**Publicity:** Denis Sultana

**Public Officer:** Jane Sultana

**Members:** Mary Austin, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Reg Felmingham, Tom Lawless, Peter & Wendy McDonald, John Pulis, Joan Sikkema, David Stickney, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).