

PO Box 19
Churchill
3842



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – September 2024

Website: <https://friendsofmorwellnp.com.au/>
Official contact of FMNP - contact@friendsofmorwellnp.com.au
A0016319X

Welcome to this month's newsletter.

For the activity we had Matt, Ken, Tamara, Beryl, Caitilin, Anita, Rose, Mike, Cathy, Jay, Joelle and Darren. We had apologies from Gordon and Graeme. The group met in the picnic area to discuss what had happened since the AGM.

The work upon the bird book continues with the final proofing being done ready for the launch of the book in November.

Caitilin has been working on the new website for this group and it has been published at <https://friendsofmorwellnp.com.au/>. The new website contains the current newsletter, the calendar, a little content with some links back to content on the old web site. When the new signage is erected at the entrances to the park the QR code on the signage will link to this new website. Future work on the website will include adding more content, migrating the content from the old website into this new format and adding a store for the purchase of books.

In relation to the new website, two new email addresses have been created: contact@friendsofmorwellnp.com.au and admin@friendsofmorwellnp.com.au. These will become the main contacts for the group. The letterheads for the group have been updated with the new website address and email address.

Later in this newsletter you will find the minutes of the AGM and General Meeting held earlier in the month and the President's report for 2023-2024. The calendar for next year's activity follow these.

For the day's activity the group divided with Caitilin, Jay and Joelle leaving to photograph some damp forest environments for the bird book while the rest of the group completed track maintenance near the Stringybark Track bridge and on the sidetrack. The task was to remove two trees from across the track and another that was encroaching upon Stringybark Track. The chainsaw got a bit of use to remove these three trees. The second tree had recently fallen and took a lot of work to remove with many branches needing to be limbed up so that the main trunk could also be cut through and removed. It was a process of working in layers until the whole tree was removed from the track.

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President: Caitilin Punshon

Vice-President: Anita Pither

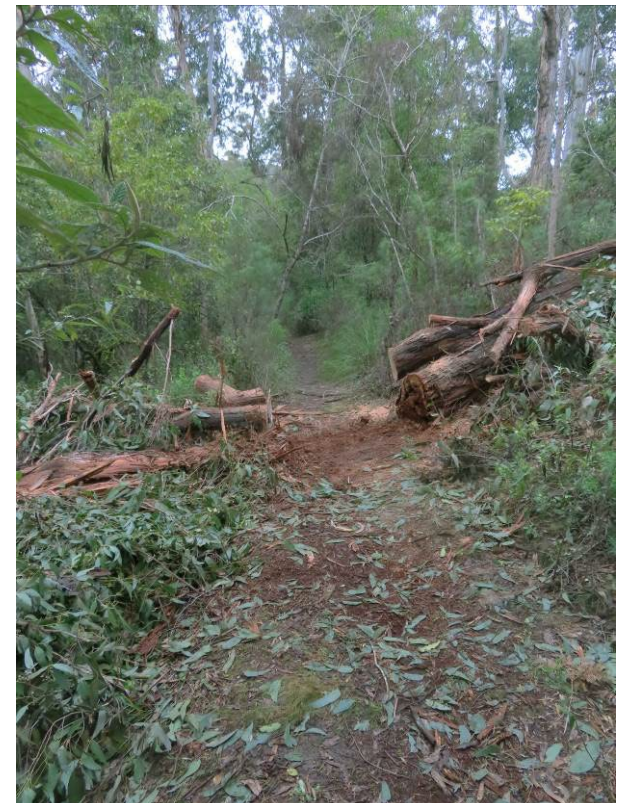
Secretary & Public Officer: Cathy Beamish

Treasurer: Mike Beamish

Publicity: Tamara Leitch

Newsletter Editor: Darren Hodgson, darren.hodgson@education.vic.gov.au

Other members: Melina Bath, Eulalie Brewster, Graeme Busch, Matt & Kerry Campbell, Joelle Champert, Wendy Davies, Gordon Duncan, Jay Duncan, Ken Harris, Jackson & Tony Lea, Rose Mildenhall, Anjali Pal, Anita Pither, Grant Pengelly, Wayne Pengelly, Chris Sikkema, Joan Sikkema, David Stickney, Wendy Steenberg, Hayley Stone & Mike Williams.



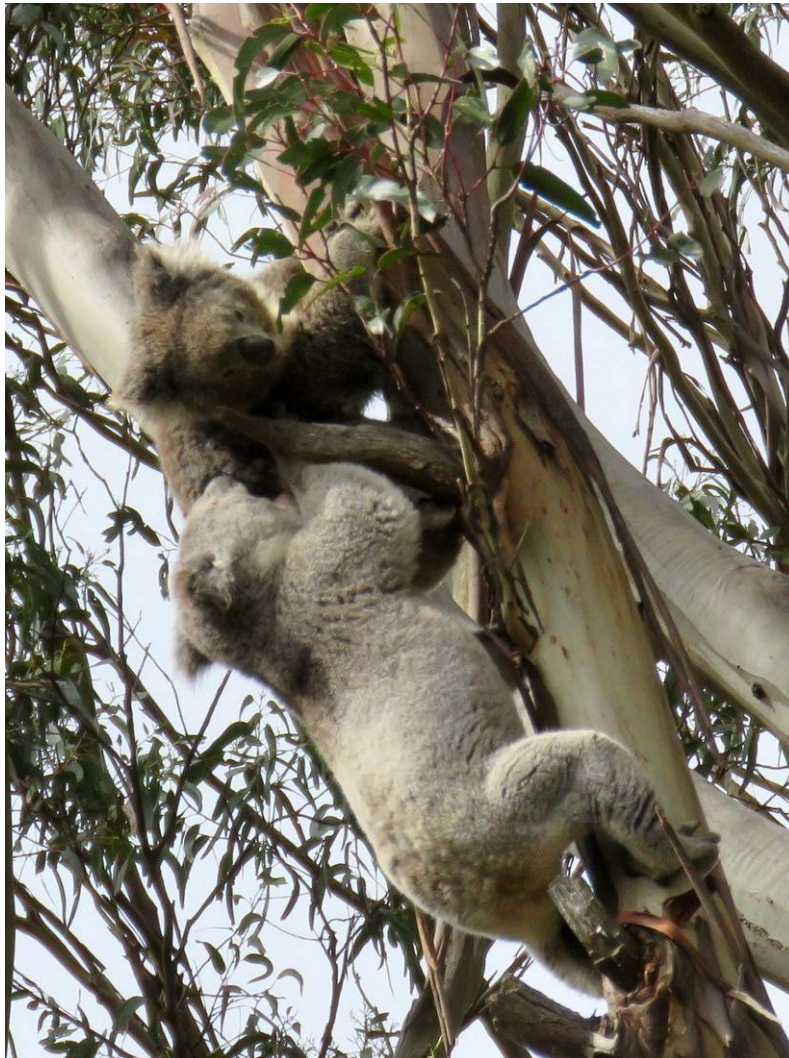
A little way up Stringybark Track there was a tree beside the track which was encroaching upon the track and stopping vehicles from passing. The chainsaw was used again to cut and then we pushed this tree off the track.

The Stringybark group returned to the Kerry Road picnic area to meet up with the other group after their photography. The whole group enjoyed lunch together. We were entertained by a group of Fairy Wrens who danced around and circled the picnic area for the period that we ate our lunches.



Male Superb Fairy-wren (Malurus cyaneus) in breeding plumage

While photographing the damp forests, Caitilin caught two koalas fighting.



Two koalas (Phascolarctos cinereus) fighting in a tree at the top of Clematis Track



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Annual General Meeting

August 4 2024, 1.30pm

Present: Rose Mildenhall, Tamara Leitch, Gordon Duncan, Darren Hodgson, Mike Beamish, Anita Pither, Caitilin Punshon, Beryl Nelson, Ken Harris, Cathy Beamish, Jay Duncan

Apologies: Matt Campbell

Confirmation of previous AGM Minutes: The Minutes of the 2023 AGM were read.

Motion: to accept the Minutes of the previous AGM as a true and accurate record.

(Moved: Caitilin, Seconded : Anita , Carried)

Business arising from previous AGM: Nil.

Correspondence: All correspondence was dealt with as it arrived.

Business arising from Correspondence: Nil

Reports:

- President's Report: presented, read and added below.
Motion: to accept the Leader's Report (Moved: Ken, Seconded : Cathy, Carried).
- Treasurer's Report: presented and explained.
Motion: to accept the Treasurer's Report. (Moved: Mike, Seconded: Beryl, Carried).
Motion: to pay the Consumer Affairs Victoria Incorporation fees for the 2023/2024 financial year.
(Moved: Gordon, Seconded: Caitilin, Carried).
- Rangers Report: Not received at the meeting, but expected soon.

The Executive recommend no change to FMNP Membership fees.

Election of Office Bearers:

The President declared all positions vacant. The election of President was conducted by Ken Harris who declared no current interest in the position. As no nominations were received prior to the meeting, all nominations were received from the floor unopposed;

President: Caitilin Moved: Ken, Seconded: Jay Carried.

The President accepted the chair and continued with the election of office bearers:

Vice President:	Anita	Moved: Caitilin	Seconded: Gordon	Carried.
Secretary:	Cathy	Moved: Caitilin	Seconded: Ken	Carried.
Treasurer:	Mike	Moved: Caitilin	Seconded: Beryl	Carried.
Editor:	Darren	Moved: Beryl	Seconded: Anita	Carried.
Publicity:	Tamara	Moved: Caitilin	Seconded: Beryl	Carried.
Ordinary Member:	Beryl	Moved: Mike	Seconded: Jay	Carried.

Motion: to register the FMNP bank account for CommBiz Online Banking and alter the signatories accordingly to Mike, Caitilin, Anita and Beryl. (Moved: Mike, Seconded: Caitilin, Carried.)

General Business:

Caitilin acknowledged both Beryl and Ken's contribution to the committee and Park over many years. Beryl as secretary for 15 years, and Ken for his numerous years as President as well as his knowledge and records of the Park since its inception.

The meeting was closed at 2.20pm.

Friends of Morwell National Park President's Report for 2023 to 2024

We have come to the end of another year, the 38th year of the Friends of Morwell National Park and I find myself writing yet another President's Report (my 20th). Hopefully someone else will take on the President's role today!

Sadly, I have to report that the repairs after the storm damage of June 2021 have still not happened, however there is every prospect that we will see it happen during the year. Committee members have attended several meetings with Parks Victoria and plans are well advanced for repairs to start in a few months!

Covid has eased enough for us to continue with all our activities this year.

At the August meeting the idea of producing a book on the Birds of Morwell National Park was proposed. A subcommittee of Anita, Caitlin, Jay and Ken was created to undertake this task, with Matt later joining the subcommittee. Progress has been good through the year, with sufficient funding being obtained. The book is well advanced, and a launch is planned at Yinnar Hall on Saturday 16th November 2024.

In August we worked on trying to clear Silvertop Hill and Muttonwood Creek tracks. Muttonwood was hard to trace and very hard work to clear.

September's track maintenance was abandoned in favour of a walk along Billys Creek looking for birds. 24 bird species were found including King Parrots, and we also saw a Wombat, 2 Kangaroos, 4 Koalas and unfortunately 8 fallow deer, which are becoming much too common.

October saw our annual Koala count, preceded by an orchid walk on Stringybark Ridge. The orchid walk was disappointing with far fewer orchids found than usual. By contrast, the Koala survey found 21 Koalas, the highest total in our 38th year of surveying and with two more heard but not seen! The Park is now recognised as a very important refuge for the declining Koala population as evidenced by a recent visit by the Strzelecki Koala Action Team of Friends of the Earth, hosted by Matt.

November saw our annual survey of the Butterfly Orchids with similar numbers to last year. Darren weeded out young pine trees beside the Jumbuck Road.

In December we had our annual Christmas barbecue, held at Matt's place because the barbecue in the Kerry Rd picnic area has still not been replaced. Before the barbecue, we walked round the Fosters Gully Track and did a little track maintenance.

In January we checked the nesting-boxes along the Billys Creek flats, and we found 57 Sugar Gliders, one of our highest totals, with young gliders with adults in some boxes.

February's activity had to be cancelled when a severe storm brought trees and branches down on the tracks and Parks Victoria therefore closed the Park. Parks quickly organised clearing the main tracks which were re-opened to the public by the end of the month.

In March we fitted in two activities to make up for February's cancellation. The day was devoted to repairing and replacing damaged nest boxes along Billys Creek, In the evening we returned to Billys Creek for a spotlight walk and light-trapping for moths.

April was a track maintenance day around the Fosters Gully Track finishing the tidy-up after the storms. Parks had already done a great job of clearing the fallen trees.

In May we were back in Fosters Gully looking at all the fungi and lichens that we could find. Gordon led a small group to start replacing the very old wooden pegs which mark the corners of the five orchid plots. The first plot was re-pegged, but the rest had to wait for another day.

We have received a gift from Latrobe City of several additional nest boxes made by some school groups. This is very useful as our stock was getting very low. More boxes are possible in the near future.

Changes to tax laws, make the Friends likely to lose its tax exemption. To avoid that we are hoping to be able to be classified as a charity. The process of applying for that classification was started at the June meeting.

The June meeting planned to complete the peg replacements on the orchid plots, but again plots were hard to locate and only one plot was located and re-pegged.

In July, the peg replacement was completed with the last three plots all being located.

Finally, I must thank our rangers, especially Gabrielle Browne, for their help. And thanks to all our members for their care for the park and the great work they have done during the year. Special thanks go to our secretary Beryl Nelson, treasurer Mike Beamish and newsletter editor Darren Hodgson and to Matt Campbell who continues to fill a role of almost President in so many ways.

Ken Harris

4th August 2024



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.
Committee Meeting
August 4, 2024

Present: Rose Mildenhall, Tamara Leitch, Gordon Duncan, Darren Hodgson, Mike Beamish, Anita Pither, Caitilin Punshon, Beryl Nelson, Ken Harris, Cathy Beamish, Jay Duncan.

Apologies: Matt Campbell.

Minutes of previous meeting read:

Motion: to accept the previous meeting Minutes as a true and accurate record.

(Moved: Beryl, Seconded: Mike, Carried.)

Business arising for previous minutes:

Seeds:

- Jay discussed the need to maintain our seed collection.
- It is currently being stored by Wendy Davies.
- We no longer have a licence to collect seed.
- Jay to investigate the possibility of storing seed with Chair of Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund.

QR code

- Initial thoughts were to provide a QR at the entrance to the park that would be linked to a survey but as the original program that was considered could only link a small number of results the idea didn't work out.
- The idea will be considered again once the new website is established.

Bird Book

- The book idea went ahead in a big way and is now at the stage where all content will be ready to give to the designer by 2nd September, 2024.
- There will be a lot of publicity as well as an official launch in November 2024.

Repairs

- Kerry Road will hopefully have all repairs done by end of year. This includes the BBQ, tables, railings and sign as well as the bridge and steps to the Stringybark Ridge track
- Billys Creek section needs repairs to a wash-out on the main track before machinery/ vehicles can access the bridges that need to be repaired. This will still take time.

Action:

We need to check with Parks if there will be equipment in the carpark in relation to the repairs at Kerry Road should it be chosen as the place to conduct a bird survey as part of the bird book launch.

General Business

Charity

- Tasks have been allocated to the sub-committee members but most are yet to be completed.

- Mike rang the Taxation Department to check on the details they have on the Friends group. The only thing they had was the ABN number and PO Box. Mike has now submitted a form via mail that will add him as the point of contact for the park, no response yet.
- The application to become a Charity will be backdated to July 1st 2024.
- Caitilin has started compiling Position Descriptions for all committee members and handed out the first draft to the elected members. This is likely a requirement of ACNC.

Website

- A new email address is to be created with the new website to allow easier access for multiple users to access it.
- All information on the current website will be transferred to the new one.
- The new website will be looked into after the bird book launch.

General Business:

2025 Calendar

- Jan – Nest box survey – Junction Road
- Feb – BYO picnic & spotlight walk and moth survey – Kerry Rd
- Mar – Nest box repairs and bird walk - Junction Rd
- Apr - track and weed maintenance - Kerry Rd
- May – twilight bird walk, BYO tea and spotlight walk – Kerry Rd
- Jun - fungi and lichen walk – location tba
- Jul – Track maintenance Junction Rd
- Aug – AGM
- Aug – track maintenance
- Sept – plant ID
- Oct – orchid walk and koala count – Kerry Road
- Nov – Orchid survey, nature walk/Pollinator survey - Kerry Rd
- Dec – Christmas function and track maintenance - Kerry Rd

Meeting closed: 4pm

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Calendar 2025

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Activities are scheduled for the third Sunday of each month, with extra days scheduled as required.

Date:	Activity:	Venue and Time:
January 19	Nesting box survey	Junction Rd, 10.00am
February 16	BYO Picnic & Spot light walk & Moth survey	Junction Rd, 6.30pm
March 16	Bird walk & Nesting box repairs	Junction Rd, 10.00am
April 20	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
May 18	BYO Dinner & nocturnal bird & bat walk	Kerry Road, 5.00pm
June 15	Fungi & Lichen walk & Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
July 20	Track Maintenance	Junction Rd, 10.00am
August 3	AGM	Kerry Road, 1.30pm
August 17	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
September 21	Plant ID walk	Kerry Road, 10.00am
October 19	Orchid Walk Koala Count	Kerry Road, 10.00am & Kerry Road, 1.30pm
November 16	Orchid Survey & Pollinators survey & nature walk	Kerry Road, 10.00am
December 21	Track Maintenance Christmas Function	Kerry Road, 10.00am & Kerry Road 1.00pm

For all activities, it is BYO food, drinks, suitable clothing and footwear, and other personal items, unless otherwise indicated in the newsletter. Up to date details of each forthcoming activity are provided in the monthly newsletter, which is emailed to members and available to the public on the website.

September Activity

Sunday 15th September 9am

The group will meet at Kerry Road car park to have a bird walk. Note the early than normal starting time. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.