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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## Newsletter – January 2026

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### December Activity Report

For the morning activity we had Caitilin, Ken, Mike, Cathy, Matt, Anita, Graeme, Gordon, Peter and Darren. For the morning activity we had an apology from Beryl.

Construction of the bridges along Billys Creek has commenced. A reminder that the area of Morwell National Park accessible from Junction Road, Braniffs Road, Tebb Terrace and Morans Road remains closed over the Christmas period and into the new year. It will reopen at the conclusion of works in late February.

The second weeding day was held in November, and thanks goes to Beryl, Graeme and Peter who worked alongside four Parks Victoria rangers. While some of the rangers tried out their new spray unit along Weir Track and Billys Creek Track, the rest of the group removed weeds near the Junction Road car park and extracted the thistles growing along Fosters Gully Nature Walk and at Lyndons Clearing. One of the Parks Vic rangers was impressed to discover that Morwell National Park has *all* of the locally growing varieties of thistle. How lucky are we?

At the recent BBQ with Parks rangers some members received certificates of appreciation for voluntary contributions to the Friends of Morwell National Park.

There have been some changes with the local Parks rangers. Our former Area Chief Ranger, Renee Simpson, has a new position at Parks Victoria as Assets and Infrastructure Manager for the Gippsland Region. It has been great to work with Renee over the past two years, and we wish her well in her new role. Gerard Delaney will be the Area Chief Ranger for West and South Gippsland. He's been with Parks Vic for 30 years, most recently as Area Chief Ranger for South Gippsland and Bass Coast. We look forward to meeting and working with him. We also welcome new ranger Sarah to this area.



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For the activity before the end-of year BBQ the group divided to walk different tracks and complete some track maintenance as each group walked around. Gordon, Mike, Ken and Matt walked around Fosters Gully looking for thistles. This group were disappointed to find the branch that was home to the prolific display of Butterfly Orchids that appeared in last month's newsletter seems to have been deliberately broken and removed from the park. Not only is it illegal to pick, damage, destroy or remove any native vegetation in a national park without permission, but a theft like this also prevents other visitors from enjoying these rare and beautiful flowers. What is even more upsetting is that the Butterfly Orchids that were taken will not survive, and there are now even fewer of them in the park that have the chance to set seed for next year's flowering.



Caitilin, Anita, Cathy and Darren trekked around Stringybark Track travelling between the west boundary, main track and some of the cross tracks. Caitilin captured photos of some of the flowers seen.



Small Grass-tree (*Xanthorrhoea minor*) in flower



Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*)

Graeme and Peter removed thistles and ragwort from another patch. On the three walks the groups observed a wombat, tiger snake and a fox on the tracks.

As the groups finished up their walks the day's expected rain started. Matt had generously offered to have the end-of-year BBQ under his veranda, so the heavy rain that followed could be mostly avoided. For the BBQ the morning group were joined by Beryl, Jay, Joelle, Tamara and Wendy. Sheltering out of the rain the group enjoyed the barbeque lunch.

On the day following the activities, just in time for Christmas, the long-awaited information signs were installed at the Kerry Road, Junction Road and Braniffs Road entrances. It's been quite a process getting the signs to this stage, so it is great to see them finally in place. Even the koala who supervised the placement of the Braniffs Road sign from a nearby tree seemed happy about it. Thanks to Caitilin for these photos of the new information boards.



The last message of the year comes from Caitilin who says "Thanks for your efforts over what has been an enjoyable and productive year of volunteering in the park. I wish you a joyful and peaceful end to 2025, and I look forward to seeing you in the new year."

## **January Activity**

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January 10.00am

The group will meet in the Junction Road car park for the annual nesting box survey and some track maintenance. If you come along for the activity you can select between looking for sugar gliders in the nesting box survey or undertaking some track maintenance of Muttonwood Track (entry will be via Brewster Road). You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.