

PO Box 19
Churchill
3842



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – September 2026

Website: <https://friendsofmorwellnp.com.au/>

Official contact of FMNP - contact@friendsofmorwellnp.com.au
A0016319X

This month we did not have our normal outside activity. Our only activity for the month was the AGM and the minutes and decisions from the meetings are later in the newsletter.

Below are the news items that have occurred since last month.

Illegal collection of firewood

We have received reports of people collecting firewood in Morwell National Park. This is illegal, and it destroys habitat for birds and animals. Offenders can be prosecuted and have items used for collecting firewood—including chainsaws, vehicles and trailers—seized. Parks Victoria are investigating this matter, so if you are aware of anyone doing this in Morwell National Park, please tell us or Parks Vic. More information can be found at <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/things-to-do/using-firewood>.

Reporting cases of bird flu

There are currently no known cases of bird flu in our area, but it is important to know what to do if—or more likely, when—it arrives here. If you see groups of five or more sick or dead wild birds of any species or even a single sick or dead wild seabird, waterbird, shorebird, bird of prey or marine mammal, you should:

- avoid contact with the sick or dead bird or mammal
- record what you see, including the location
- report it to 1800 675 888 or Agriculture Victoria's online portal at <https://forms.bio.vic.gov.au/wildlife-influenza-investigation>.

More information can be found at <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/poultry-diseases/H5N1-avian-influenza-H5-bird-flu/report-sick-or-dead-wild-birds-and-wildlife> and <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/campaigns/birdflu>. You can also read about susceptibility risk for various species and download risk scores at <https://www.dccew.gov.au/environment/invasive-species/diseases-fungi-and-parasites/birdflu/understanding-risk>.

Also included at the end of this newsletter are:

- The minutes from the AGM, held on 16th August, including the President's report.
- The minutes from the Committee meeting, held on 16th August.
- 2027 Calendar of activities

Friends of Morwell National Park Inc: PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842, <https://friendsofmorwellnp.com.au/>

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President: Caitilin Punshon

Vice-President: Gordon Duncan

Secretary & Public Officer: Anita Pither

Treasurer: Mike Beamish

Publicity: Tamara Leitch

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

Other members: John Arkinstall, Cathy Beamish, Beasley family, Graeme Busch, Matt & Kerry Campbell, Misja Carbo, Olga van Cauwenberghe, Joelle Champert, Wendy Davies, Dodd family, Jay Duncan, Peter Earl, Ken Harris, Kuan-Yu Lin, Tom Mabin, Rose Mildenhall, Beryl Nelson, Wayne Pengelly, Alex Raymond, Chris Sikkema, Joan Sikkema, Holli Smith & Sandra Walker.

September Activity

Sunday 20th September 10am

The group will meet in the Kerry Road car park to conduct a plant ID walk and undertake some track maintenance. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc. Annual General Meeting Minutes

August 16, 1:30 p.m. 2026

Held at: Rose Garden Wing Room, Maryvale Crescent, Morwell

Present: Tamara Leitch, Darren Hodgson, Anita Pither, Caitilin Punshon, Beryl Nelson, Ken Harris, Matt Campbell, Rose Mildenhall, Gordon Duncan, Peter Earl, Duncan Harris.

Apologies: Mike Beamish, Cathy Beamish, Joelle Champert, Jay Duncan, Graeme Busch.

Confirmation of previous AGM Minutes:

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

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

Business arising for previous minutes:

- Nil

Correspondence: All correspondence was dealt with as it arrived.

Correspondence to be saved on webmail for anyone who asks to look at it.

Business arising from correspondence: Nil

Reports:

- President's Report: presented, read and added below.
Motion: to accept the President's Report (Moved: Caitilin, Seconded: Matt, Carried.)
- Treasurer's Report: presented and explained.
Motion: to accept the Treasurer's Report. (Moved: Caitilin, Seconded: Beryl, Carried.)
As the group now comes under the banner of Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission, we no longer report to Consumer Affairs Victoria. The ACNC will advise CAV of our Annual Information Statement. Caitilin to confirm exact procedures.

The Executive recommends no change to FMNP Membership fees.

Election of Office Bearers:

The President declared all positions vacant. The election of all members was conducted by Ken, 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: Anita Seconded: Gordon Carried.

Vice President: Gordon Moved: Caitilin Seconded: Anita Carried.

Secretary: Anita Moved: Caitilin Seconded: Peter Carried.

Treasurer: Mike Moved: Mat Seconded: Caitilin Carried.

Editor: Darren Moved: Caitilin Seconded: Gordon Carried.

Publicity: Tamara Moved: Caitilin Seconded: Anita Carried.

Ordinary Member: Beryl Moved: Caitilin Seconded: Peter Carried.

General Business: Nil

The meeting was closed at 1:50 p.m.

Friends of Morwell National Park President's Report 2026

Looking back at the twelve months since my last president's report, I am pleased to see many causes for celebration.

The first is our 40th anniversary. With thanks to Anita, Beryl, Cathy and everyone who helped out on the day and before, the event was a great success. It was wonderful that so many former members could come and enjoy the afternoon with us. We were also joined by past rangers, Gabby Browne, who travelled all the way from the Grampians to be there, and Ian Roche, who we were glad to see was alive and well. Impressively, six of the seven people who have been president of Friends of Morwell National Park were present, even if one of them ducked out of the photo of Cathy and Anita's beautiful cake being cut.

A second cause for celebration was the long-awaited completion of bridge works along Billys Creek. The new and restored bridges mean that visitors to the Park can once again walk all the way to the weir and back without getting wet feet. The similarly long-awaited information signs were also installed, just in time for Christmas.

Both the bridges and the signs improve the amenity and accessibility of the Park, and it remains a popular place for walking groups and community members to visit, both during our activities and at other times. We were joined by numerous members of the public at the koala count and each of the plant identification, orchid, bird and fungi walks we held throughout the year. Staff from the local Environment Protection Authority office enjoyed guided tours of the Park during their wellness day, and members of the Parks Victoria publicity team also visited and wrote a great article about the Park and the Friends group featuring Ken and Matt.

Changes to staffing and the organisational structure at Parks Victoria towards the end of 2025 meant that Area Chief Ranger, Renee Simpson, moved to a new role in December. Fortunately, most of the projects that several of our members worked on with Renee over many months were completed or in their final stages before she took up her new position.

Although our contact with Parks Victoria has not been as consistent this year, we continue to enjoy good relationships with the local rangers. This includes working alongside them at one of our activities and on two weeding days in November. It is the second consecutive year that Parks Vic have scheduled summer weeding days with us, and we hope it will be an annual occurrence.

Other reasons to celebrate over the last twelve months include the publication of Ken's fourth book, *Lacewings of Victoria*, in August 2025, and the two planting days we held in July 2025 and 2026. To me, our work on these revegetation projects reflects both new beginnings, as the seedlings grow and become part of the landscape, and the continuation of work done by the group over its 40-year history. Much of the area along Billys Creek was planted by Friends of Morwell National Park. It's a legacy we can be proud of and one we're still contributing to, just like our flora and fauna surveys that have produced valuable data over the decades.

These surveys and track maintenance remain the focus of our annual calendar, and it is important to me that members can choose the kind and level of activity they want to do. Ensuring that a range of options is available each month hopefully means everyone has been able to enjoy the time they have spent in the Park. The diversity of talents and interests among us is one of our strengths, and it enables us to care for the Park in different ways.

I'm grateful to each of you for your contributions, and I especially appreciate the support and extra hours that the committee members have given. Thanks to Cathy for serving as secretary, and welcome and thank you to those who will take on committee roles over the next twelve months.

In some ways, our group evolves, and in others, it stays the same. Together, we can look forward to another enjoyable year of being in the Park, doing good work and sharing each other's company.

Thanks.



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc. Committee Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2:00 p.m. 2026

Held at: Rose Garden Wing Room, Maryvale Crescent, Morwell

Present: Tamara Leitch, Darren Hodgson, Anita Pither, Caitilin Punshon, Beryl Nelson, Ken Harris, Rose Mildenhall, Gordon Duncan, Peter Earl, Matt Campbell, Duncan Harris.

Apologies: Mike Beamish, Cathy Beamish, Jay Duncan, Joelle Champert, Graham Busch.

Minutes of previous meeting:

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

Moved: Caitilin, Seconded: Tamara, Carried

Business arising for previous minutes:

- Revegetation of Silver Banksias on West Boundary Track - Peter has germinated 13 Silver Banksia and is happy to germinate some more. Parks is happy for us to do small painting activities without extra permission.
- Nesting boxes - Working at heights restrictions impacting nesting box repairs has yet to be resolved. Parks will need to get a contractor to do the work, which may mean we are unable to be involved.

General Business:

1. 2027 Calendar

- Jan – Nest box survey & weeding, Junction Road, 17th Jan
- Feb – Track maintenance & weeding, Kerry Road, 21st Feb
- Mar – BYO picnic & nocturnal wildlife & moth survey, Kerry Road, Sat 20th Mar
- Apr – Bird walk, Junction Road, 18th Apr
- May – Track maintenance, Junction Road, 16th May
- Jun – Fungi and lichen walk, Kerry Road, 20th Jun
- Jul – Track maintenance, Kerry Road, 18th Jul
- Aug – AGM 15th Aug
- Sep – Plant ID Walk, Junction Road, 19th Sept
- Oct – Koala count & Orchid walk, Kerry Road, 17th Oct
- Nov – Orchid survey & nature walk, Kerry Road, 21st Nov
- Dec – Christmas function and track maintenance, Kerry Road, 19th Dec

Weeding and track maintenance will be listed every month.

2. Other Projects

- Graeme has requested weeding days be scheduled for before Christmas and between Christmas and New Year to tackle Ragwort.
- There is a large tree down on Blue Gum Hill Track. Parks are considering redirecting the track around it due to the size and not having a chainsaw large enough to cut through it.
Action: Matt may have access to a chainsaw and will see if he can borrow it.
- Discussion around establishing a register of assets.
Action: This will be done slowly during upcoming activities rather than tackling the task as one separate activity.

- Track maintenance required on Zig Zag and Lodge. Some small trees are down.
- Track maintenance beyond the weir was discussed. Matt reported that someone he knows has been out there and was able to get through to the end of the Park. The Grand Strzelecki Committee is defunct.
- Discussed options for 60th Anniversary of the Park. Suggestions for a pub meal to celebrate and possibly some guided tours around the Park. Decisions to be made closer to the date.

3. Change to signatory for bank account

Action: Beryl to be removed and Gordon to be added

Items without notice:

- Matt will be in the Park looking at weeds with Federation University on 20th August.
- Caitilin read the current inventory of publications. We will need to decide if we want to reprint publications which are running low.
- There is a Heritage Gap Study being carried out in the Latrobe region. Discussed any places of interest in the Park we would like to list. Community consultation is currently taking place.

Meeting closed: 2:36 p.m.

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Calendar 2027

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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 17	Nesting box survey & weeding	Junction Rd, 10.00am
February 21	Track maintenance & weeding	Kerry Road, 10.00am
(Sat) March 20	BYO Picnic & nocturnal wildlife walk & Moth survey	Kerry Road, 6.30pm
April 18	Bird walk	Junction Rd, 10.00am
May 16	Track Maintenance	Junction Rd, 10.00am
June 20	Fungi & Lichen walk & Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
July 18	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
August 15	AGM	To be determined, 1.30pm
September 19	Plant ID walk	Junction Rd, 10.00am
October 17	Koala Count Orchid Walk	Kerry Road, 10.00am & Kerry Road, 1.00pm
November 21	Orchid Survey & nature walk	Kerry Road, 10.00am
December 19	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.