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**FROM  
THE  
PRESIDENT  
Alison  
Watson**

Welcome to all our members for what we hope will be an exciting year.

Special thanks to Margaret MacDonald for the hours of work she has put in as Secretary over many years. There is always so much work that the Secretary does, a lot of it unseen, and we really appreciate her dedication. We are very happy she will still be with us on the Committee. Thank you to Sue Guinness for taking on the secretarial role. Welcome to Peter Crowcroft with his experience in environmental education who is joining the Committee this year.

For all the people who worked so hard for the protection of the Heath it is very good news to know it will now be part of the National Park. A couple of special sections, Peregrine Track and Messmate Track, have been retained by Alcoa at this stage as a buffer and possibly seed collection for revegetation work as they continue to work on the mine site. These will probably come across to the National Park at a later stage. Parts of the current lease, in the Great Ocean Road/Eumeralla vicinity, could be for other recreational use which will be considered in the future through consultation with the community. We look forward to the Heath being managed and protected within the National Park system and hope there will be more Parks Victoria resources and staff to help with this over the coming years.

### **WELCOME EXTENSION TO GREAT OTWAY NATIONAL PARK - Margaret MacDonald**

For many years members of the Friends group have worked alongside Parks Victoria, Alcoa, ANGAIR, DELWP, the Anglesea Heath Consultative Committee, Geelong Environment Council and other conservationists to protect the values of the Anglesea Heath (Alcoa Lease) and in an effort to eventually have it transferred into the Great Otway National Park.

The Friends were therefore thrilled when the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio, visited Anglesea on February 1 to make the announcement that over 6510ha land surrendered by Alcoa prior to the expiry of their lease term would be transferred back to the Crown. It is a welcome extension to our National Park.

The relevant legislation enabling the land to be absorbed into the National Park is expected to be introduced into Parliament in May this year. Alcoa has held the lease since 1961 with the mine and power station ceasing operation in August 2015.

Alcoa has committed to work with the Government and the community to rehabilitate the former coal mine and power station site with plans well underway for this to occur.



The Anglesea Heath has been described as one of the richest and most diverse vegetation communities in Victoria with a range of threatened flora and fauna species.

The Friends look forward to extending their environmental activities into this newly acquired area.

*Above: The Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio, congratulates community members.*

*Left: Community members and stakeholders celebrate the announcement in Anglesea.*



## ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDING

**Tuesdays 9.30am–11.00am**

Contact: Margaret 0412 652 419

*A visit to a local coffee shop will follow the weeding activities.*

### URQUHART BLUFF

**March 14**


*Meet at carpark on Great Ocean Road where road leads down to beach at Urquhart Bluff at 9.30am.*

*We will continue to work on the infestation of Flax-leaf Broom and a stand of Boneseed (both weeds of National Significance).*

### MANGOWAK SCHOOL SANCTUARY

**April 11 & May 9**

*Meet in the carpark adjacent to Aireys Inlet Community Hall at 9.30am. We intend working with students, teachers and parents to reduce environmental weeds infesting this special reserve named Mangowak School Sanctuary in 2016.*

## MAMMAL SURVEYS

Contact: Patrick 0437 561 702

Mammal surveys using our remote cameras are usually carried out following committee meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. We are always pleased to welcome any people interested in our indigenous fauna to participate in these activities.

Naturally we are keen to photograph rare and threatened species and a minimum of feral animals, but whatever animals we do locate are adding to the overall picture of the fauna populations in the Park. Please make contact to find the meeting place and approximate meeting time.



## COMING EVENTS

### SERENDIP SANCTUARY & KEVIN HOFFMAN WALK - LARA

**Saturday March 18**

Contact: Margaret 0412 652 419

*Meet at Angair office at 9.30am*

*Bring morning tea & lunch*

Serendip Sanctuary is an excellent example of the open grassy woodlands and wetlands of the volcanic Western Plains, the perfect place to learn about and experience birdlife and wetlands ecology. View from the hides some of the 150 species of birds which breed at or visit Serendip Sanctuary.

This will be followed by a stroll along the nearby Kevin Hoffman Walk, a scenic 800m trail with significant indigenous vegetation, lush ground covers, flowering native shrubs and trees overlooking part of the tranquil Hovells Creek.

### MOGGS CREEK/COALMINE CREEK WALK

**Saturday April 15 at 9.30am**

Contact: Ross 0408 875 535

*Meet at Moggs Creek Picnic Ground at 9.30am*

*Bring morning tea & lunch*

This is a pleasant walk through forest vegetation with a dense understorey of wattles and heathland plants under the eucalypts, mostly along vehicle tracks behind Moggs Creek and Eastern View. We may see rare Wrinkled Buttons *Leiocarpa gatesii* which flower in late summer. Many forest birds inhabit the area, while views of the ocean are a bonus.

### ANGLESEA HEATH WALK

**Haggarts and Allardyce Tracks**

**Saturday May 20 at 9.30am**

Contact: Alison 0400 570 229

*Meet at Angair office 9.30 am*

*Bring morning tea and lunch*

Medium 6.5 km circuit (with car shuttle along Gum Flat Rd). In anticipation of the Anglesea Heath being absorbed into GONP, this walk will take us out on the heathland along Haggarts Track with lovely vistas all around. We may see Emu-wrens if we are lucky and we will look out for Juniper Wattle and Anglesea Grevillea. The final 2 kms along Allardyce Track has some ups and downs and an uneven surface.





## PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO AGM 2017 – Alison Watson

I am very pleased to present the Friends President report for 2016. We have had another activity filled year supported by our committed volunteers.

**Mammal surveys** have been carried out at Coalmine Rd, Ironbark Basin with Friends of Pt Addis, Urquhart Bluff and Anglesea Heath, Anglesea River, Coogoorah Park, Fairyland in conjunction with Deakin University researcher Lilly Zhuang-Griffen. We are building up our knowledge of local species and Patrick is recording the results on the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA). A DELWP workshop was attended by members to help more of us contribute to the VBA. Our Research Permit with DELWP was renewed and we have an application to Animal Ethics Approval in process to allow us to continue to use baiting stations with the cameras.



Thank you to Rani (DELWP Threatened Species Officer) for organising the *Caladenia maritima* survey in September/October while many of our regular members were away. The final count was 682 flowers, more than the previous year but less than some other years.

**Environmental weeding** - This past year we have worked at Moggs Creek, Coalmine Rd and Urquhart Bluff. The work at Moggs Creek was carried out together with the Green Army and Friends of Moggs Creek. At Urquhart Bluff the size of the Flax-leaf Broom proved difficult for us but it was good to find small indigenous plants appearing underneath. We intend to have a small planting in this area in autumn to enhance the natural regeneration.

**Walks** - Our walks have included Ironbark Gorge, Little Aire and Triplet Falls, Marengo - the first section of the Great Otway Walk, a Fungi walk at Grey River and Pt Addis Ironbark Basin walk. The spotlight walk in January was very successful with the discovery of a family of Yellow-bellied Gliders at Moggs Creek.

We had two very successful excursions, the first to Werribee Zoo where we were thrilled with close observation of Orange-bellied Parrots. The other was to Cairnlea Wildflower Reserve and Iramoo Grassland Reserve to learn about rare grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plains. The annual koala survey at Kennett

River yielded fewer koalas than previous years, perhaps due to the fires last summer.

We were very pleased to have Giselle Owens as our new Friends Liaison Ranger early in the year and sad to see her go at the end of the year! She has been a great support for us. We look forward to a new Liaison Ranger very soon. We appreciate the support we receive from all the local Parks Victoria staff.

**Other events** - Our display at the ANGAIR Wildflower Show featured an updated koala display together with a beautiful Eastern Yellow Robin table display by Kaye, and Margaret Lacey's bird photos were on the screen.

A number of members attended the play 'Extinction' in Geelong and had a very pleasant and thoughtful evening.

The commemorative plaque for 25 years' service for Friends of Moggs Creek was designed and attached to the seat at Moggs Creek. The Erskine Falls Donation box which has helped with funds for many years is to have a facelift with some of Kaye's beautiful drawings. We have been invited to attend a stakeholder group to discuss plans the Eumeralla bike trails and the protection of the sensitive environment.

Promotion of the Friends group has included our Facebook page which Patrick is regularly updating, providing information to local papers and Friendsnet, and of course our newsletter which Jane has produced so beautifully over the past year.

**Future plans** - We would like to involve more people in our activities and any suggestions of how we do this would be

appreciated. We hope to involve school students this year to help protect the small Sanctuary behind the Aireys Inlet school.

A lot of our activities are popular regular events such as the koala count and the wildflower walk but we will try to incorporate new experiences to encourage new people and will continue to network with other likeminded groups.

Thank you to the committee and friends for their dedication, support and involvement over the year. There are many hours put in by everyone, and lots of behind the scenes work. Special thanks to Margaret for her amazing effort and dedication to our group and our local environment. We couldn't do it without her.

One other very important person to mention is Evelyn Jones. She has been a loyal member of the Friends group, a committee member since the beginning and a regular at every event - weeding, walks and surveys - a wonderful worker and friend. We will miss her at our committee meetings and hopefully see her at some of our outings.

Thank you to ANGAIR for all your support and we look forward to future joint activities and projects. Finally we are very pleased to see the decision has been made for 89% of the Anglesea Heath to become part of the Great Otway National Park. A formal announcement will be made in May 2017. Thank you to everybody.



## AGM GUEST SPEAKER

Mark Le Pla, Ecologist from the Conservation Ecology Centre at Cape Otway gave a most informative talk at our AGM and shared with us his enthusiasm for wildlife conservation. He has had extensive fieldwork experience in south east Queensland, Scotia Sanctuary, Newhaven Sanctuary and Flinders Ranges.

His work at the CEC involves research and monitoring projects, revegetation and fox and feral cat monitoring and control. In particular he is involved in collating records from many sources for the Otway Threatened Species Research Network (OTSRN), an invaluable resource of information regarding local flora and fauna.

Use of spatial mapping techniques and other technology can indicate actual and potential areas of suitable habitat for species which have been detected during camera monitoring, including possible locations of vulnerable and endangered species such as Spot-tailed Quoll, Long-nosed Potoroo and Southern Brown Bandicoot.

Other projects which Mark is involved with are the Leafy Greenhood study and the dog scat detection project, which has been extended - dogs are currently being trained to detect Long-nosed Potoroos in the Otways. **Kaye Traynor**

*Above: Patrick Flanagan from Friends of Eastern Otways presents Mark Le Pla with a book voucher in appreciation of his presentation to the Annual General Meeting. Below: Some of the vulnerable animals in the Great Otway National Park which form part of Mark's research, from left: Southern Brown Bandicoot (photo courtesy Trevor Prescott), Spot-tailed Quoll and Long-nosed Potoroo.*



## EUMERALLA UPDATE

We are attending regular Eumeralla Trails Working Group meetings with Parks Victoria and representatives from ANGAIR, Surf Coast Trails Group, Anglesea Tourism, the Scout Camp and Surf Coast Shire. Deakin University have inspected the area and will be testing for *Phytophthora cinamomi* when suitable conditions with consistent moisture is available to achieve an accurate result. The grass tree track that we are concerned about will possibly be realigned to avoid the very healthy stand of grasstrees. We are hoping for a positive outcome. There have been a number of aboriginal sites recorded and meetings will be held with Wadawurrung representatives to discuss their requirements.

The bike users are keen to do the right thing and have held track maintenance working-bees with Parks Victoria staff. They have also named tracks but they need PV approval and will need to follow PV guidelines for signs. Sites are being monitored for erosion. Trailhead signage with environmental and cultural information is being developed. **Alison Watson**

### FRIENDS OF EASTERN OTWAYS COMMITTEE FOR 2017

President	Alison Watson
Vice-President	Patrick Flanagan
Treasurer	Ross Davey
Secretary	Sue Guinness
Assistant Secretary	Kaye Traynor
Committee members	Ross Murray, Jane Shennan, Margaret MacDonald, Peter Crowcroft
Kaye Traynor will continue in the position of Public Officer.	



## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

### END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS - December 10

Although a smaller group than usual, the 26 members of Friends of Eastern Otways and ANGAIR who came along to the Moggs Creek Picnic Ground on Saturday, December 10 appeared to enjoy the occasion. Our numbers were swelled by Giselle, Cathy, Alyssa, Peter, Aaron and Katrina from Parks Vic, and Rani from DEPLW.

Twelve members joined us for the circuit walk around Moggs Creek at 10am where we heard a variety of bird calls, observed a number of plant species flowering, a cluster of spittfires on an Ironbark leaf, and overcame the obstacle of a large eucalypt that had fallen across the path in the recent inclement weather.

Back at the picnic ground about noon and Peter, Giselle, Lachie and Ross had the BBQ under control, and it wasn't long before people were able to sit in this very pleasant environment enjoying the good food and good company.

Reflecting on the year's activities both groups thanked their members for their support – a special thank-you to Giselle who has been a great liaison ranger for the Friends Group this year.

*Below: Friends of Eastern Otways and Angair members enjoy the BBQ and Moggs Creek circuit walk in December to celebrate another successful year for the two groups.*



## MAMMAL SURVEYS

### CAMERA MONITORING

Remote camera monitoring is on hold as we wait for animal ethics to renew approval to use attractants to lure animals to the site of the cameras. In November and December we were able to put out cameras at baited sites in Ironbark Basin near Point Addis under our old ethics approval. We then changed cards in the cameras early in December and left them at the same sites for another two weeks. The cameras were retrieved just before Christmas.

The November placement included the annual walk and camera placement and was a joint activity with the Friends of Pt Addis. We had a good turnout, with Paddy Day and his mother Sian along to help us set up the cameras. Due to the long placement time we had an estimated 3000 images on the cameras. Alas, nothing startling to report.

There were many shots of Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Black Wallabies, Brush-tailed and Ring-tailed Possums, Short-beaked Echidnas, Currawongs (both Pied and Grey), Little Ravens and Australian Magpies. The notable captures were a series of shots, in a number of the camera locations of a female Black Wallaby with joey in the pouch, who popped out, danced around and jumped back in.

I've turned one sequence of stills into a short video clip, that I'll put up on the Friends website, hosted by ANGAIR (go to, <http://angair.org.au/angair-friends-groups/friends-of-eastern-otways-great-otway-national-park>).

Of course feral animals were around, though surprisingly (given their usual presence at our monitoring sites) no foxes, just a hare and a deer. I have no expertise with identifying deer, but maybe one of you do, so I've included a frame.

Margaret and Kaye thought they may possibly have identified a quoll latrine out on the track to Currawong Falls so we have the (unbaited) cameras out there this month. We'll let you know what we found in the next newsletter! **Patrick Flanagan**





## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

### PT ADDIS EXCURSION - November 19

A combined group of 15 Friends of Eastern Otways and Friends of Pt Addis gathered at the Ironbark carpark. We were pleased to have a student from St Joseph's College, Pat Day, and his mother Sian join us for the mammal survey. We placed 4 cameras and bait stations near the car park, then after a cuppa we headed down the nature walk track observing flowers and birds along the way. The dam which had been reconstructed with the help of Angair members a number of years ago was completely dry and not holding water. Many birds were calling including Rufous and Golden Whistlers, Woodswallows and White-throated Tree-creepers.

We continued down to the 'snake breeding area' with lovely views back through the basin and the cliffs towards Southside. Neither snakes nor Emu-wrens were to be seen though often the Emu-wrens are in that area. Heading up a quite steep hill we stopped at the conveniently placed new seat, then on to the lookout where we decided to have lunch. We had a superb view of the beach and the peregrine nesting site. Phil commented that it'd be perfect if a peregrine flew past and not long after it did, settling on the cliff face! There was no evidence of a nest that we could see.

Continuing on up the steps we wound our way along the Koori track enjoying the interpretive signs, thinking how nice it would be if there was a seat for each one – to sit and contemplate at leisure. Along this track Grass-blue butterflies were enjoying the sun on some sweet smelling flowering Sweet Hounds-tongue *Cynoglossum suaveolens*. We finished the walk at the beach access and lookout where Phil and Lachie drove us back to the cars. It was a very enjoyable day, perfect weather, blue sky and great company. **Alison Watson.**

*Below left: Members of the group enjoy the look at Pt Addis, and (right) placing the mammal survey cameras.*



### SPOTLIGHTING AT MOGGS CREEK - January 6

The group enjoyed a summer evening having a barbecue tea before spotlighting for the Yellow-bellied Glider in part of the National Park near Moggs Creek. To try to locate the gliders the group waited quietly in a likely area of habitat and listened for the animals' distinctive call.

Not long afterwards, a couple of gliders could be heard calling in the area. The calls were followed and a special spotlight was used to scan the relevant eucalyptus trees in search of this rarely-spotted nocturnal creature. Patience eventually paid off and to the delight of the group, a juvenile Yellow-bellied Glider was seen on one of the trees. The group enjoyed the evening so much we have decided to make the January spotlighting activity a regular feature in our yearly program.

*Below: the group met for a BBQ at Moggs Creek before the walk. Centre: a juvenile Yellow-bellied Glider on a tree.*





## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

### A SPECIAL FIND - February 4

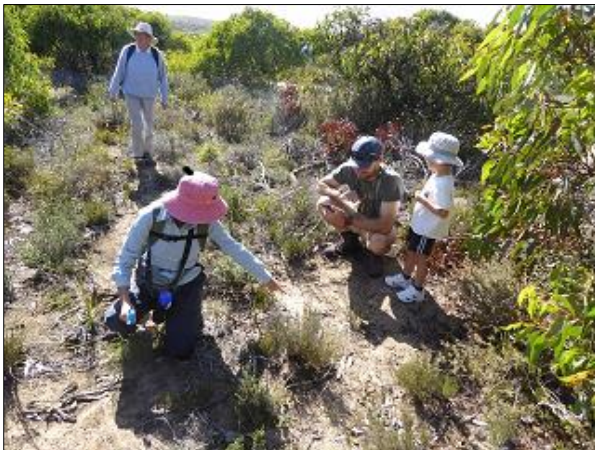
It was the small pea-like flowers just coming into bloom that caught the eyes of Alison and Phil Watson as they were enjoying a coastal walk at Point Addis. Not sure just what it was,



they captured it on camera and we were able to identify the species as the Small Milkwort *Comesperma polygaloides* a plant that is listed as a threatened taxon on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act since 1991. Its present status in Victoria is vulnerable.



We knew the plant existed in the area as the late Mary D. White had shown it to some of us back in the early 1990's and she had illustrated and described it in her publication *Coastal Vegetation of Anglesea-Aireys Inlet Region* (1990).



However we have not been aware of its presence for over 20 years, and the Anglesea record is not included in the Flora of Victoria or on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act Action Statement. The recent record will now be placed with the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas. Small Milkwort has a disjunct distribution occurring in Western Australia, South Australia and through to western and central Victoria. It is an erect, perennial herb that grows to about 20cm tall. The narrowly oblong leaves are bluish green and the small purple-mauve butterfly-like flowers appear on the end of the flower stems in racemes 2-7cm long.

Now that we know of its location, the Friends will be working with Rani Hunt DELWP to ensure that the colony is protected. **Margaret MacDonald**

### PLANT SURVEY & COASTAL WALK - February 18

It was a perfect morning when our group of 15 set off to survey the area where the rare plant, Small Milkwort *Comesperma polygaloides*, had been seen earlier in the month. At that time just six flowering stems had been observed.

We were pleased to welcome Christina and Mary from Lorne, and Ollie, perhaps our youngest member who had come along with his dad, Peter, our newest committee member. Thanks to the keen eyes of the group our count of this rare plant exceeded 50 specimens. There were quite a number in flower, but many were just the distinctive bluish-green foliage,

frequently found hiding amongst other coastal vegetation.

We had a pleasant walk back along the beach before having an early lunch at Pt Addis and just managing to get back to the cars before the rain.

**Margaret MacDonald**

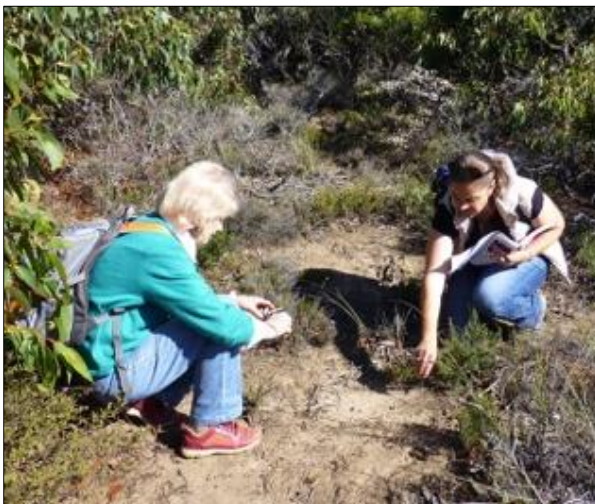
*Top left: The group sets off with high expectations.*

*Top right: Small milkwort *Comesperma polygaloides*.*

*Centre: The group gets down for the count!*

*Left: Kaye Traynor and Rani Hunt from DELWP.*

*Right: Debra White takes a closer look.*



**Annual Ranger Report: January 2016 – January 2017**

It was a busy year for staff, and a busy 12mths for staff movements. Here is a rundown of the current staff situation:

- Katrina Lovett has returned from 13 months maternity leave to resume her Ranger Team Leader – Eastern Otway role. Katrina has returned on a part-time basis, working 2.5 days a week.
- Peter Hay has been successful in obtaining the Ranger Team Leader – Lorne role for the next two years. This position has been vacant for over 12 months, so it is exciting that it has been filled for the next two years.
- Recruitment is currently underway to backfill Peter’s substantive Ranger role based at Lorne. This is the position that Giselle was acting in for the last 12 months. We’re hopeful to have someone in place by the start of March, and we’re sure the Friends would like someone in place soon too!
- Emma Danby will be acting as the District Operations Coordinator for West Coast District until 30 June, and will still be based at Anglesea. This position provides support and guidance to the District and reports to Dale Antonsen (District Manager).
- The Ranger Team Leader- Anglesea position will be advertised and filled shortly. Lachie Davis and Craig Hobbs will be co-sharing acting Ranger Team Leader – Anglesea until the position is filled.
- A new addition has joined the Anglesea team, with Jack Stratford successful in obtaining the job share Ranger role with Carlie Bronk – he commenced this position on the 22 February.
- Alyssa Giffin, our Seasonal Ranger, finished up on 24 February. Alyssa has done a fantastic job running the Summer by the Sea program and working with school groups to raise awareness of the marine protected areas.
- Parks Victoria’s new Chief Executive, Matthew Jackson, commenced on 13 February.


**Significant weather events and recovery**

The year was characterised by significant weather events, the aftermath of which ended up being the main focus for staff for most of the year. At the start of the year there was the Wye River and Separation Creek wildfire and subsequent recovery works. This was a significant focus for staff for an extended period of time, with some of the rehabilitation ongoing. During winter there were multiple snow events, which impacted on some of the walking tracks around Lorne. Come spring and there was the storm/flooding event, which impacted multiple locations in the park and caused landslides in the fire affected areas around Wye River, resulting in more staff being deployed for emergency response.

As a result of the recovery efforts, we did fall behind in some of the routine park management

activities, such as walking track maintenance. Therefore, we relied heavily on the Fire and Emergency team for assistance to get all the walking tracks open and to the required standard in time for the busy holiday period. Thank you Fire team!

**Weeds in the Otways**

There have been multiple weed projects running over the past year:

- Otway Eden
- Coastal Tender projects
- Post-fire weed recovery at Wye River/Separation Creek

Due to the success of Otway Eden and the work that the Friends and ANGAIR have undertaken, we have been successful in leveraging off these to obtain grants such as the Coastal Tender projects, providing more funds to help with conservation works. All the projects are on track due to the hard work Giselle put in prior to her departure.

The Arthur Rylah Institute has been engaged to conduct a review of all Weeds and Pests on Public Land projects, including Otway Eden, to see where the program can be improved. The outcome of this review should be completed by the end of March.

Unfortunately, there have also been a number of new sightings of the South African Weed Orchid around the park in the last 12 months, primarily around Lorne and Wye River. Darren Phieler, Field Services Officer with the Fire and Emergency team, has been proactive with ensuring hygiene protocols are adhered to when vehicles and machinery have been working in the sites where infestations occur, including getting this information included as part of the planned burning work orders.

*Above: Locals and visitors alike took the opportunity to talk to staff at the information centre set up at the Anglesea Riverbank Market in January. (Report continued page 9).*



### Use of technology in park management

District and Regional staff have been looking at how we can use technology to aid us with park management, such as the use of Remote Piloted Aircraft (aka Drones). In February 2016 a RPA was utilised to map the section of vegetation between O’Donohue Rd car park and the Gap car park on the ocean side of the Great Ocean Road. The purpose of this was to see if it would be a useful tool to distinguish what weeds were present without having to survey the whole site on foot, as each weed species could be identified by their unique colour spectrum. The spatial analysis of this work still needs to be undertaken as it was being coordinated by Katrina, so didn’t progress whilst she was on leave. If this trial proves successful we will look to utilise RPA mapping in other areas across the park.

RPAs have also been used to monitor cliff stability and likelihood of slips around the Anglesea area. AECOM, in conjunction with a geomorphologist from Latrobe University, have been analysing and developing a cliff monitoring program, potentially utilising a mobile app to aid staff with efficient collection of monitoring data.

### Otway Ark Project

Fox monitoring cameras were rolled out between the Western and Central Otways, Aireys Inlet and Anglesea. Monitoring of the cameras has provided insight into the animals visiting the sites and have indicated some use by small mammals, such as Southern Brown Bandicoot and Long-nosed Potoroo. If you see any foxes locally please report to Cathy Longmore ([cathy.longmore@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:cathy.longmore@parks.vic.gov.au)). We also encourage you to visit the Feral Scan homepage (<http://www.feralscan.org.au/>) to report on other feral species, such as cats, goats and pigs.

### Tracks and visitor site upgrades

- Southside – repairs around the grated drains on the walk to the beach access point, new marine protected area (MPA) sign installed on the walk.
- Southside Hang-gliding Launch Site – new Astroturf, re-gravelling of the access track and an installation of an information sign. SANE have also been revegetating around the site.
- Point Danger Marine Sanctuary – a new sign MPA sign has been installed at the lookout and the old sign at the top of Point Danger next to the Anzac memorial has been removed.
- Sheoak Falls – replacement handrail on the track above the falls

### Interesting animal sightings

- Broad-toothed rat - Camera monitoring by fauna ecologist Peter Homan along the Kalimna track has yielded images of Broad-toothed Rat (*Mastacomys fuscus*).
- Blue Ringed Octopus – Point Danger Marine Sanctuary

That’s just a snapshot of the previous 12 months, but it has been another busy year for staff. The Surf Coast team thank the Friends of Eastern Otways for your continued commitment and contribution to Great Otway National Park, and other park estate. Your endless supply of energy is an inspiration to all the staff, and we can’t thank you enough for the incredible work you do. May 2017 be another productive and fulfilling year for us all!

### ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDING AT URQUHART BLUFF

Our efforts for the summer months concentrated on the area of coastal reserve adjacent to the Great Ocean Road at Urquhart Bluff where we have removed very large infestations of Flax-leaf Broom. We are thrilled with the indigenous vegetation that we have uncovered once the environmental weeds have been removed. We have had excellent attendance at all our sessions and they have been enjoyable experiences even though it has been hard work. We have been pleased to welcome a number of new people to our group and we have all enjoyed the cup of coffee as a reward for our efforts.

*Right: At Urquhart Bluff, Dusty Miller enjoys rescuing the indigenous vegetation from environmental weeds.*



### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

We value your membership, so thank you to everyone who has renewed their subscription for 2017. The Friends of Eastern Otways from time to time makes submissions to the State and Federal Governments concerning issues we believe are important to the conservation of National Parks in general and to our Great Otway National Park in particular. The message is strengthened by the number of our supporting members.

If you receive your newsletter by post, the label on the envelope shows the current year of your membership, (i.e. ‘17’ for 2017). If you haven’t renewed your membership, a form will be enclosed with the newsletter. If you receive the newsletter electronically, and you haven’t renewed your membership, an electronic copy of the membership form and payment details will be attached to the same email. Email copies are in color, posted copies are black and white. We encourage everyone to receive their newsletter by email, saving volunteer’s time and the need to print, purchase envelopes and labels, and postage.

Hello Friends of Eastern Otways! It has been a busy couple of months over the holiday season and the parks have had many visitors enjoying our beautiful backyard. We would like to share with you some recent staffing movements, upgrades to visitor sites/tracks and some updates on some of our programs/projects that have occurred over the last month.

### Marine Protected Area signs

New signs are being installed across Point Danger Marine Sanctuary, Point Addis Marine National Park and Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary. These signs provide information on the Marine Protected Areas and the activities that are allowed within them, and are replacing the previous signs which are dated and weathered. Thus far, one sign has been installed at Point Danger along the access track leading down to the marine sanctuary, and another for Pt Addis Marine National Park has been installed at the Southside walking track. There are another 7 to go!

### Expansion of Great Otway National Park

As announced by the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February, Anglesea Heath is to become part of Great Otway National Park. Leading up to this announcement, Parks Victoria staff held two community engagement stalls at the Anglesea Market over the busy holiday period to get the community's input and aspirations for the Anglesea Heath land that was earmarked for inclusion into GONP. Over 200 people left their visions for the area, a great response!

**Eumeralla Trail Network formalisation plan** has been endorsed by Parks Victoria. Prioritising and planning of works has commenced to implement the plan, including starting the process to have the tracks formally set aside as part of the management plan. Some on-ground works have commenced, with Lachie Davis working with the Surf Coast Trails Group to repair and maintain the trails in the area.

*Pictured at right: Alyssa Giffin with participants in the Junior Ranger Summer by the Sea activities, and the Blue Ringed Octopus found at Point Danger.*



### Otway Ark Project

The Otway Ark Project is taking action to protect native species living in the Great Otway National Park and surround, particularly the rare and threatened mammal species vulnerable to fox predation. The project comprises of a comprehensive camera monitoring program and ongoing fox control. Fox control has been expanded from the park surrounding Anglesea to Aireys Inlet and will be implemented within the next 18 months.

### Summer by the Sea Program

The Anglesea Summer Ranger, Alyssa Giffin, ran the Junior Rangers Summer by the Sea activities including Rockpool Rambles and Beachcombs at Point Danger Marine Sanctuary, Point Addis Marine National Park and Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary. Some interesting animals were observed over the activities, including a Blue Ringed Octopus spotted at Point Danger.



The Schools Junior Ranger program has kicked off at Surf Coast Secondary School with 150 Year 9 students undertaking interactive activities on marine threats. This initiative, run throughout February will involve Torquay College, Aireys Inlet P-12 College and Surf Coast Secondary School and will range from discussions on Marine Protected Areas, marine food webs and include some field trips to the MPAs.

### Informal track use

Unfortunately, there has been an increase in use and construction of informal tracks around Anglesea. We have been working hard to brush-matt the most used tracks whilst vegetation is still present. If you see any activity on these tracks, please notify Parks Victoria Anglesea Office on 5220 2040.

*We hope you had a great holiday season and are looking forward to the year ahead. As always, thank you for all your hard work in the park.*