



Secretary: Ellen Doxey, PO Box 491, Aireys Inlet, Victoria 3231  
Mob: 0404357011 Email: ellen.doxey@gmail.com



**FROM THE  
PRESIDENT  
Patrick  
Flanagan**



We had a very successful Annual General Meeting on Sunday February 9 with over 40 members in attendance. We called for nominations for the committee and as there was only one nominee for each position, the committee for 2020 was duly elected. I am continuing as President, Peter Crowcroft is the Vice President, Ellen Doxey steps in as Secretary, Kaye Traynor continues as Assistant Secretary, Ross Davey as Treasurer, and Alison Watson, Margaret MacDonald and Gretel Lamont continue as committee members.

The two vacancies for committee members were subsequently filled from attendees at the AGM by Craig Grabham and John Lenagan. The committee welcomes Craig and John and looks forward to them joining us. We were also educated by the presentation from Matt Russell and Katrina Lovett from Parks Victoria which placed the work we do in a wider regional Parks context.

Once the business of the day was over, we were entranced by the presentation from our guest speakers, Genefer Walker-Smith, Peter Marriot and Marilyn Hewish from Museums Victoria on the recent Otways Bioscan. Peter and Marilyn's deep interest in moths and the description of their findings opened our eyes to another aspect of the special area in which we are fortunate to live and volunteer.

### **DETECTING FIRE FROM THE SKY** Katrina Lovett, Parks Victoria, speaks with Dale Appleton of Forest Fire Management

*What is your primary role in fire management?*

I'm an Air Observer for Forest Fire Management Victoria. The Air Observer has two separate jobs:

- 1) To do reconnaissance and detection work to find new fires or where fires have changed substantially. This aerial detection is done in partnership with the CFA and there are two or more up in the plane at the same time.
- 2) Using Air-borne Information Gathering (aka a fancy camera) to provide real-time tactical intelligence on a going fire. The camera can see through smoke and over considerable distance in infra-red and full colour. The camera is 'slaved' to mapping software, sending the information to the mapping operator in the back of the aircraft. It means we can draw the edge of the fire very accurately, record all the spot fires, determine where assets are and upload to eMap instantly – near real time. It supercharges the work you can do with pen, paper and eyes. This information is then sent on to the Planning Unit of an Incident Control Centre (ICC).

*What's it like having a bird's eye view of a fire or other incident?*

It's a privileged position to be in, you and your aircraft seeing the true picture, although there is also the weight of responsibility on your shoulders – you want to be efficient, concise and accurate so the best possible information is provided to the ICC. It's extremely satisfying to provide the intel to help the crews on the ground. You are often sent to places where no one else has been or can get to, so we're providing real-time information as to what is actually happening. However, it can also be challenging when you're seeing homes lost and realise that means there will be people grieving.

*Working closely with Parks Victoria's Science and Effectiveness team, do you have any insights into the recovery process?*

About two-thirds of the team are out in the field doing impact assessments on alpine bogs, or capturing Eastern Bristlebirds around Croajingolong National Park to help secure the population.

*What has struck you with this fire season?*

The sheer scale and intensity in parts of the fire affected areas. I saw places burning which had burnt only 2 years ago. Being up in the air you see how vast the fire area is and you can get a view of the burn intensity. But I also saw green valleys with water running through them, with everything else around it burnt.

*Any other thoughts you want to share?*

From everything I've seen from the air, when fire starts running over houses, you do not want to be there. Have a plan, leave early, secure everything that is dear to you. Do not leave it to luck or fate.



*The view from above, aerial detection mapping recent Gippsland fires.*



## ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDING

### MACKILLOP COLLEGE ENVIRONMENTAL CARE PROJECT

After a very successful environmental care program run at Moggs Creek with the Mackillop College Year 8 students in 2019, the Friends will again be joining with Parks Vic, GORCC and Friends of Moggs Creek to run a similar program this year.

Environmental weeding is a key focus of the Friends' group, and the additional help given by the MacKillop College students enables us to make a great impact on the conservation of indigenous vegetation in the Moggs Creek area. The school's environmental program runs over seven weeks with our part of the program taking place on a Friday morning for about two hours on May 15, May 29, June 5, June 12, June 19, June 26, July 17. We do need the help of our committed volunteers as leaders to make this project a success. It is a matter of working with a small group of students and applying the herbicide where they cut the woody weeds. We would love to see some new members and Friends involved. If you feel that you could help at one or more sessions please contact Margaret 0412 652 419.

**SUMMER WEEDING** At right, our enthusiastic group which took part in two sessions concentrated on the removal of Coast/Sallow Wattle near Pipeline Track at Anglesea where, in a joint program with ANGAIR and Parks Vic, we were able to make a good impression.



### AUTUMN PROGRAM

#### Urquhart Bluff Heathy Woodland Site

Tuesdays 9.30am-11.00am March 10, April 14, May 12

Meet at large car park Great Ocean Road at Urquhart Bluff.

Enjoying a stunning view, we will concentrate on removing Boneseed and young Sallow/Coast Wattle growing in an area of very significant indigenous vegetation. We would also like to make a plant list for this valuable area. Contact Margaret 0412 652 419.



## COMING EVENTS

### Erskine Falls Sign Official Opening and Lemonade Creek Walk

Saturday March 21

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Hall at 9.30 am

Contact: Alison 0400 570 229

- Launch our lovely new sign at the Erskine Falls and enjoy a view of the falls.
- Walk the four km Lemonade Creek Track through to Blanket Leaf Picnic Ground. This attractive walk has a few ups and downs, bridge and boardwalk creek crossings, views and fern gullies. We may see fungi and possibly a Rose Robin.
- Lunch at the Blanket Leaf Picnic Ground.
- Optional walk back to Erskine Falls or return by car.
- We will leave cars on our way through in the morning.



### Jamieson Track walk and tree planting

Saturday April 18

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Centre 9:00am

Contact: Matt 0439 775 880

Come and see Parks Victoria's new Jamieson Campground and walking track with a fantastic view of Mt Defiance and the sea. The walk crosses areas of forest that have come back from the 2015 Wye River bushfire and takes in many thick gullies and beautiful views. The walk is moderate to hard difficulty with some stairs on the route. Bring morning tea, water, sturdy footwear and wet weather gear. A BBQ lunch will be provided.



### Kelsall's Rock Walk

Saturday May 16

Meet at Aireys Inlet Community Hall at 9am

Contact: Patrick 0437 561 702

Join us for a walk through the beautiful Otways. After a steep climb up to Kelsall's Rock lookout, enjoy the magnificent views across Grassy Creek valley. Bring morning tea and lunch, sturdy footwear and wet weather gear.







*Above: President Patrick Flanagan presents his report.*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM

Of course, I have to start with a list of people to thank. As President, I'd like to thank the committee for their commitment and hard work.

We say a sad farewell to Sue Guinness who is standing down as Secretary and I thank her for her effort and wish her and Jo all the best holidaying in their caravan.

A special thank you is owed to Jane for her creativity and skill in assembling and editing our Newsletter. Members regularly contact us with congratulations on the quality of the publication. Jane is also standing down from the committee, but thankfully she will continue to design and edit our newsletter.

On behalf of the Friends, I'd again like to thank Matt Russell for his hard work and support over the year, in his role as our liaison ranger.

Katrina Lovett has, as always, provided extra support to us in our dealings with PV. We also thank our tireless band of weeders who help us every month and as well as at other times when called on.

## Working Bees

This year our monthly enviro weeding working bees focussed on two areas of special interest to the Friends: the O'Donohues Heathlands (from February to August) and the riverside area behind Camp Road (from September to November). The area behind O'Donohues Road was the site of a prescribed burn in autumn 2018, and there was plenty of Sallow Wattle, Sweet Pittosporum and Boneseed seedlings that needed to be removed. Parks Vic staff were of welcome assistance on three of the sessions to assist with clearing the large Sallow Wattle. As a bonus, we discovered a colony of the uncommon striped greenhood orchid. As a result of the burn, the extensive stands of flowering grasstrees were also quite impressive. Later in the year we returned to the Camp Road site that we had weeded extensively around 2011 where removed regrowth of the usual weed species, sallow Wattle and Boneseed. Again, we welcomed assistance from Parks Vic staff with chainsaws to clear the larger trees.

## Camera monitoring

We had a very successful and exciting year. Our cameras were in the field for 1182 camera nights. At the start of the year we left them in the O'Donohues Heathland, in part continuing to monitor the Southern Brown Bandicoot we observed last year. The cameras were then put out in and around the Anglesea River valley, along and near Harrisons Track North and were in place at four separate locations in the area for a total of 936 camera nights.

We had some very special visitors to the sites: an Agile Antechinus, a White-footed Dunnart, another Southern Brown Bandicoot and a Koala as well as the usual visitors, Black-tailed and Red-necked Wallabies, Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Echidnas, and possums (both Brushtail and Ringtail). We also observed an Australian Owlet Nightjar. Other bird species we observed were Bassian Thrush and Grey Shrike Thrushes and Grey Currawongs. Of course, we observed some feral animal species including Foxes, Fallow Deer, Cats and Black Rats.

All fauna captured on the cameras are entered on the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas. Feral animals are also reported to Claire Miller of Parks Vic for the Otway Ark program. The presence of the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot, the vulnerable White-footed Dunnart and the Agile Antechinus, nominally not threatened, yet declining in abundance, suggest that the area around the Anglesea River Valley is a precious refuge for these uniquely Australian mammals and should be actively protected.



*Above: Incoming Secretary Ellen Doxey (left) with former Secretary Sue Guinness who has retired from the committee.*



*Above: a lone Koala was captured on camera in the Anglesea River Valley in November.*



## Well attended walks

Our regular walks were well attended. In March we did the Two Rivers Walk (Kennett and Cumberland Rivers), Red-River Track/Denham Track in April, Lake Elizabeth in July, Kalimna Falls in August, and an e-bike ride to Cape Otway in November. Our wildflower walk was along Harrison's Track.

Lake Elizabeth was the location of our Fungi walk. There were certainly plenty to see. On the Kalimna Falls walk we were thrilled to observe and photograph four Dusky Antechinus. Two, unfortunately were deceased while the other two were very active. These were all probably males in the heat of the breeding season.

*Left: In April, the group enjoying the Anglesea Heath Walk stopped at the intersection of Red River Track and Denham Track.*





## Caladenia maritima survey

Conducted in September-October we counted a total of 1178 flowers, not including *C. maritima/carnea* hybrids. Forty plants were fertilised by Neil Anderton of the Victorian Herbarium. The numbers were healthy this year, which is probably a result of the 2018 prescribed burn of the O'Donohues Heathland, mentioned before. Earlier in the year we helped to collect fungi to grow this special orchid in captivity at the Royal Botanical Gardens Cranborne.



Above: Victorian Herbarium's Neil Anderton.



## Koala counting at Grey River

In June we counted 41 individuals at our annual Grey River survey. The numbers were up from 31 in 2018 but substantially fewer than the 71 we counted before the 2015 bushfire. Spotting and counting Koalas appeals to children and this year among the 23 attendees we had six young ones and two teenagers to assist our ageing eyes. The bushfires in other parts of the state have been disastrous for Koala numbers and I have been deeply distressed (as I'm sure you have been too) to see the effects of the fires on them and their habitat.

## Educational activities

We were assisted by Parks Vic and GORCC with providing conservation experience to Year 8 students from the MacKillop College Werribee as part of their Outdoor Education program. For this we had them weeding in the heathland above the Great Ocean Road, behind to the houses in Robyn Rd in Moggs Creek as well as along Old

Coach Road. This was a massive commitment with close to 100 volunteer hours by the Friends over seven weeks in May to July in two hourly sessions. In addition, 280+ volunteer hours by the students was supplemented by contributions from Parks and GORCC staff. Margaret did her usual professional job in organising the effort.

We also helped Carly Bronk from Parks Vic to present the Junior Ranger program through the year with a spotlighting activity at Moggs Creek Picnic Ground (unfortunately no gliders) and a very-enjoyable Wildflower Challenge that the kids (and adults) got right into.



Above: Students from MacKillop College Werribee with the several Friends at Moggs Creek.

## Program planning for 2020

We are putting finishing touches to our program of activities for this year. Locations for walks this year include Carlisle River, the Wildlife Wonders Project, Kelsall's Rock (*at left*) and Jamieson Track.

We will have a planning meeting in the next couple of weeks for our camera monitoring program for the year. If you are interested in being involved in either or both phases, please get in touch with Gretel ([gretel.lamont@gmail.com](mailto:gretel.lamont@gmail.com)) or me ([prflanagan@gmail.com](mailto:prflanagan@gmail.com)).

We also have to submit a final report to the Ethics committee for our current clearance and prepare an application for clearance for the next three years. Separately, we have to apply to renew our permit to place the cameras in the park. Our current permit expires next month and so if we want the monitoring to be uninterrupted, we need to start the process.



We will assist again with the Outdoor Education program for MacKillop College. We'll have to put our thinking caps on to identify weeding sites within walking distance of the Guide Camp at Moggs Creek, where the students camp when visiting the Surf Coast.



We are holding a joint session with ANGAIR on safe handling of Glyphosate later this month. This session is being presented by John Slykhuis, who has extensive teaching experience in chemical handling.

Working bees occur on the second Tuesday of the month. Full details for the autumn program are elsewhere in this newsletter, however, early in the year we will be concentrating on the Urquhart Bluff area of the Great Otway National Park. Please join us.

Above: the much-loved Kelsall's Rock lookout. Right: the Urquhart Bluff heathy woodland weeding site for March 10, April 14, May 12. It contains significant indigenous vegetation, and we would also like to make a plant list for this valuable area.





## AGM 2020 - MEETING REPORT

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – February 9

Forty-three people attended the 2020 Annual General Meeting on 9 February. Presenting the President’s Report, Patrick thanked two retiring committee members, Sue Guinness (Secretary) and Jane Shennan (Newsletter Editor), for their outstanding contribution. He also expressed appreciation for the co-operation and support given by Park Victoria Rangers Matt Russell and Katrina Lovett.

The Report summarised the past year’s events as well as the proposed program of activities for 2020.

Matt and Katrina presented the Ranger Report for the year. It was a comprehensive summary of programs and priorities, including Otway Ark, pest plant programs, camera trapping, Operation Avon – trail bike compliance, Wye River Fire Recovery, Bioscan, planned burning, repairing or replacing ageing infrastructure, working with volunteer groups, education and threatened species.

Ros Gibson took the Chair for the election of office bearers and committee. We welcomed Ellen Doxey who is replacing Sue Guinness as Secretary of the Friends.

Following afternoon tea, the guest speakers were introduced:

**Genefor Walker-Smith (below left)**, Otway Bioscan Great Otway National Park, spoke about the Bioscan project. It is a collaboration between Museums Victoria and Parks Victoria. The main focus is to improve the level of knowledge of biodiversity in the Park and in particular, the lesser known fauna. Fieldwork was conducted from September 2018 to March 2019.

**Peter Marriot (right)** is a Museum Volunteer and also involved with the Bioscan project. He spoke about the Moths of the Otways, and the methods of studying them in locations within the Otways, in particular, Sheoak Creek Picnic Ground and Blanket Leaf Picnic Ground.

**Marilyn Hewish (centre), Entomologist and Ornithologist**, spoke about George Lyell - collector of moths and butterflies in the early part of the 20th century. His collection contains 51,000 specimens, is housed at the Museum and is currently being sorted and catalogued. Some local moths were on display in showcases and publications were for available for sale. **Kaye Traynor**



## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

### NEW YEAR SPOTLIGHT WALK- January 3

The weather was mild, the mosquitos were almost absent as 23 participants including five children gathered for a pre-walk barbeque. Margaret told us she and Pete had observed two Powerful Owls as well as Yellow-bellied Gliders a few days previously. She talked about their relative sizes with the Powerful Owl 60 cm compared with the 30 cm Yellow-bellied Glider. She had a lovely photo to remind us how amazing these birds are.

We were all rather sombre with thoughts of those in bushfires across the country, but Margaret reminded us to be thankful and appreciative for what we have here in our own special area.

At the first sign along the track Margaret read out the poem which asks us to slow down and ‘stop and stare’ for a while—good advice. Pete demonstrated how to detect animal scats and shocked a few

by eating one! (a dried prune)? As we quietly walked along the track, there was very little to hear and we stopped along the bridge and waited. Sure enough, right on cue—two Yellow-bellied Gliders glided onto the tree right in front of us! Very little sound but some lovely views as they seemed to observe us from behind the tree trunk. Then whoosh as they glided away over our heads.

We followed their calls as we made our way slowly back to the carpark, listening to the Boobook Owls calling in the distance. There was no sign of the Powerful Owls. It was a highly successful evening in our bush. The new rechargeable spotlight was very successful. It is very light and of great benefit not to have to carry a heavy battery on your shoulder. **Alison Watson.**



Above: Kaye with some enthusiastic spotlighters.



Above: On cue, a Yellow-bellied Glider arrived on the scene.





## FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER



### END OF YEAR CELEBRATION AT MOGGS CREEK – December 14



We certainly could not have hoped for a better day for our annual walk and barbeque at the Moggs Creek Picnic Ground on Saturday, December 14. For a good number of the 24 people who gathered at 10.30 for the walk it was a first time visit to this part of the Great Otway National Park, and those who know the Moggs Creek area well took pleasure in sharing the delights of this favourite track.

As we walked the circuit track that had been well cleared for us by Parks Vic staff there were plenty of flora and fauna observations for us to admire. Although the conditions were dry there was still water in the gullies and there were sightings of 23 bird species and many calls. The highlight was the Fan-tailed Cuckoo who gave us a clear view and beautiful song, unusual for a not often seen bird.



The flowers also did not disappoint, and the Victorian Christmas Bush *Prostanthera lasianthos* delighted us all as it was just coming

into bloom along the track. Another highlight were the two Tall Cinnamon Bell Orchids *Gastrodia procera* that we discovered on the side of the track. This is a rare orchid in our area and is most attractive with its bell-shaped, hanging cinnamon-brown flowers tipped with white.

Back at the picnic ground and the numbers had now doubled and continued to increase until we finally reached our total of 51 adults and 7 children. Ross and Phil did a good job with the barbecue that Parks Vic provided for us. Once again people had brought a variety of salads, and plates were soon filled. It is always so pleasant relaxing in this great environment and sharing experiences with others.

A few words of congratulations on another successful year of conservation activities and thank-yous were expressed by Patrick on behalf of the Friends, and Wendy on behalf of ANGAIR. Katrina from Parks Vic expressed their appreciation for the volunteers' efforts. Another year had come to an end and people were looking forward to a break to recharge and start again in 2020. **Margaret MacDonald**

*Top: A happy gathering at Moggs Creek. Above left: Colleen admires the Christmas Bush. Above right: crossing the bridge. Below left: Ross and Phil on BBQ duty. Below right: After a delightful walk, it's time to tuck in.*







Above: the camera catches a surprised look from a Swamp Wallaby, and right, a Brushtail Possum. Below from left: feral visitors included several cats, a fox and a Southern Brown Bandicoot.

### CAMERA TRAPPING

The Friends have been camera trapping on Harrison's Track in the Anglesea River Valley since May. Cameras were placed at four different sites for 157 days, a total of 943 camera days.

It is encouraging that the Southern Brown Bandicoot, *Isodon obesulus*, and White-footed Dunnart *Sminthopsis leucopus* were cited as both are listed as threatened species. A koala was also seen – a species that may well be considered threatened after the recent summer fires.

Not surprisingly, Swamp Wallabies *Wallabia bicolor* were seen at all four sites with echidnas at three sites.

Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Common Brushtail Possum, Ringtail Possums and Agile Antechinus *Antechinus agilis* all made an appearance at two sites.

Unfortunately, cameras also trapped cats, foxes and deer. It has been very rewarding working with Parks Victoria rangers on this project and we hope these data will assist in Park management. If you would like to know more, or want to be part of the camera trapping team, do let us know.

**Gretel Lamont.**



### STATE WIDE INTEGRATED FLORA AND FAUNA TEAM SEMINAR

Ellen, Margaret and Kaye attended the SWIFFT Seminar held on February 13. The theme for this Seminar was Marine Biodiversity Conservation. The four speakers are all marine scientists and it was fascinating to learn about the sort of work they are involved with. There is an amazing amount of knowledge being gained through their efforts in the many different fields of marine conservation.

- Dr Tim O'Hara, Senior Curator, Museums Victoria, '**Mapping Marine Biodiversity**'. His research interest is marine biogeography of the oceans of the world, from the shallow tropical reefs to the cold deep sea abyss and the levels of biodiversity occurring within these environments. His study also includes the evolution of echinoderms present on the seafloor throughout the world.
- Matt Montemurro, Education Outreach Officer, MMF, '**Marine Mammal Foundation, Victoria's Burrunan Dolphins and Community Engagement**'. Matt's presentation highlighted the aims of the Marine Mammal Foundation, its research goals to establish and advance knowledge, conservation and protection of Australian marine mammals. His role as Education Outreach Officer is to connect with communities, run classroom learning and citizen science programs. He focussed on the recent discovery of a new Dolphin species in the Southern waters of Victoria and Tasmania. It is the Burrunan Dolphin, *Tursiops australis*.
- Dr Rebecca McIntosh, Research Scientist, Phillip Island Nature Park, '**Seals as Ecosystem Sentinels**'. Rebecca explained the importance of marine predators and why fur seals are a good gauge for the health of the ecosystem. Their numbers were decimated by sealers in the early 1800s. Research into behaviour, foraging, ecology and diet, general health and predicted effects of climate change. The use of drones for counting populations, the problems caused by pollution and entanglement, mainly to pups and juveniles.
- Dr Jo Klemke, Principal Policy Analyst, Victorian Fisheries Authority. '**Balancing community values on rays and banjo sharks in our nearshore waters**'. Joint Winner of Victorian Coastal Award 2018. Involvement with Banjo Action Group which aims to protect rays and banjo sharks by consultation with other stakeholders to increase protection for these animals. **Kaye Traynor**



**MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE**

Members are reminded that fees of \$15.00 (for individuals or families) are due for 2020. The fees may be paid by electronic bank transfer to Bendigo Bank, BSB 633-000, Account Number: 150830826, Account Name: Friends of Eastern Otways (remember to include your ID) or by cheque made payable to Friends of Eastern Otways, mailed to The Treasurer, P.O. Box 140, Anglesea 3230.

To those members who have renewed their subscription and to those who have made a donation, on behalf of the committee, thank you.

To those members who have not renewed so far, for whatever reason, please do consider it. We depend entirely on your support for our ongoing efforts to protect our environment and advance the cause of conservation. For example, we recently made a \$500 donation, on your behalf to Zoos Victoria Bushfire Emergency Wildlife Fund. Your subscription helps our work and any donation you make on top of that would be of great assistance.

If you receive your newsletter by email, the personalised email will have the year to which your membership is paid. If you receive the Newsletter by post, the year is on the address label. Both forms of communication will have your membership ID as well. If the year of membership is 2019 or earlier we ask that you please bring your membership up to date. **Ross Davey, Honorary Treasurer.**



**NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome new members Rob and Ursula Shepherd from Ascot Vale, Sue Leavesley from Aireys Inlet and Noah Eastwood from Wye River.



**FRIENDS AT WORK**

*Volunteers tool up before working hard at one of the two sessions which focussed on removing Coast/Sallow Wattle from the Pipeline Track Anglesea area as part of the summer weeding program.*

**and FRIENDS AT PLAY at the End of Year Celebration at Moggs Creek**



*Above: Ollie with an orchid; Friends enjoying morning tea before the walk; the table is set for a fun day.*

*At left, from left – a Fan-tailed Cuckoo serenaded us with a beautiful song; Cut-leaf Daisy, Common Triggerplant, and Derwent Speedwell.*





Hello Everybody,

I am very happy to write this extended Annual Ranger Report. It has been a great chance to reflect on our year in the Surf Coast Parks Victoria team. Thank you to everybody in the Friends of Eastern Otways for your value work over the year, there are so many things that we couldn't do without you.

This summer has been very busy for our staff with our continuing response to the bushfires in the east of Victoria, and local fires in our district. Not to mention managing the many visitors to the park estate.

It has been a good year for Parks Victoria on the Surf Coast. Our team has been very lucky to receive some new additions, with Patrick Hutchison and Ruby Wicks joining us this year, along with Camille Acuna who was back as our Summer Ranger.

Patrick is working at Lorne, and is responsible for looking after our walking track network and the many waterfall sites in the Great Otway National Park.

Ruby has joined Katrina Lovett and me to look after our pest plant projects, particularly the Biodiversity Response Planning Project.



Above: Katrina Lovett (left) and Matt Russell present the Ranger Report to the AGM.



### Jamieson Campground and Walking Track

The new and improved Jamieson Campground, near the town of Wye River, is almost ready for campers. It has been renovated to account for growing demand and has gone from a small very crowded campsite without toilets to a site with facilities such as fireplaces, toilets, BBQs and a beautiful lookout. The sites at Jamieson Campground will hopefully be available for booking soon.

The new walking track between Separation Creek and Jamieson Campground is also open to the public, with the official opening by Minister Lisa Neville and some fanfair on February 22. I hope the Friends all get a chance to go and experience this walk. The campground and walking track were funded as part of the Wye River Recovery Project. Bookings can be made on the Parks Victoria Website.

### Junior Ranger

This year we have been very lucky to have our seasonal ranger Camille Acuna to assist Carlie Bronk in delivering a big summer holiday junior ranger program. Camille delivered a variety of fun activities which has been well received. I should also thank the friends for helping with some of our Junior Ranger activities last year, and we hope that we can continue to hold these activities.

### Otway Ark Project

This year has been a big year for the Otway Ark Project, with an expansion of the program, which we can deliver as a result of increased funding and with the help of the Conservation Ecology Centre. Our Ark team has been able to bait foxes across a wide area of the Otways, and this included sites in the Otway Forest Park, plantation, and private land. Also, as most of you know our camera monitoring program continues to provide valuable data that helps us understand the animals that are living in the Great Otway National Park.

Below, is a couple of our highlights this year – from left: Long-Nosed Bandicoot at Distillery Creek, a Brown Falcon and a Kangaroo having a close look at the camera. On the right is a map which demonstrates how wide our baiting program is currently.



### Biodiversity Response Planning

As I mentioned above, we are lucky to have Ruby Wicks join our team. Ruby will work with Katrina Lovett and me on pest plant control. Ruby is overseeing a new project that is going to complement our Otway Eden called Biodiversity Response Planning Project. Essentially this project is aiming to control woody weeds which threaten biodiversity in the eastern section of the Great Otway National Park.

The Biodiversity Response Planning is already starting to control Sweet Pittosporum across a large area in the Great Otway National at the back of Lorne. Ruby is also going to work closely with ANGAIR to combat some of the invasive plants in the old Alcoa lease area next to Coalmine Road roundabout.





Above: Under construction - the new lookout on Alcoa Boundary track will be part of the Anglesea Heath Bushwalking Trail.

## Anglesea Heath

As most of the friends are aware, switching the Anglesea Heath to National Park has been a long road. Last year there was a lot of motor bike compliance operations, planning, and consultation. However, this year some fantastic projects have started to get under way, which has been really exciting for the team. The planning for the new campground at Gumflats Road is well and truly under way. It will be a family friendly campground that will hopefully provide a good hub for the public to enjoy the Anglesea Heath. The new lookout at Alcoa Boundary track is almost complete. This lookout (*at left*) will top off a future Anglesea Heath Bushwalking trail for visitors to enjoy the Heath. Finally, new gates are being installed to help enable shared use of tracks in the Anglesea Heath and this will help protect the tracks from damage, erosion, and illegal use.

Lastly, thanks once again to everybody in the Friends group, you make our jobs as rangers much easier with the valuable time that you put into the Park, and I am sure we will have another fantastic year working together. Thank you! **Matt Russell, Ranger, Lorne.**



## Summer visitor action

It feels as though summer has gone by in the blink of an eye, with visitors coming from all over the globe to visit the Surf Coast and Great Otway National Park. Returning once again this season as a Summer Ranger, I was pleased to have the opportunity to again deliver interpretation activities and support the Parks Victoria teams at Anglesea and Lorne with their everyday duties, especially during such a challenging fire season.

The Junior Ranger activities ran across both inland areas and on the beach, and we had families from many areas joining us for our sessions. From creating damper and talking campfire safety at Hammonds Road Campground to exploring the rockpools at Point Addis, there was always excitement and intrigue by both parents and children alike. With lots of positive feedback from the sessions run, I'm sure we will have a few familiar faces for our next round of Junior Ranger activities!

Once again, I brought some of the Marine Park to them and ran some activities within the Anglesea and Wye River Big4 Holiday Parks to encourage those kids staying there to explore in nature, particularly to see what incredible critters they could find down on the beach. These activities focused on our wonderful marine treasures and how our marine creatures camouflage, with participants even being able to decorate their own decorator crab! I also had the opportunity to visit another park and watch how one of their activities was run, with the hope that in the future a similar Climate Watch Junior Ranger activity could be run within the Otways. It was fantastic to see an engaging activity that incorporated use of technology that could be done even at home, and that it is helping scientists to understand the effect of climate change on our environment.

It has once again been an incredible experience to be able to share with all our visitors all that is wonderful in the Great Otway National Park and encouraging them to explore in nature, and educating them on their surroundings and igniting their love and appreciation for our special places, especially within the future generation. This experience has once again shown me the

hard work and dedication by the Parks Victoria team and local community that goes into protecting this special environment. I am extremely grateful I was given the opportunity to have this wonderful experience for a second season. **Camille Acuna, Summer Ranger**

Above: Tuck in time after the activities. Left: Camille showing wildlife images to participants. Right: Junior firefighters.

