



## Bungalook quarterly report – still going strong

Just when we thought we were on the road to some form of normality; it was back to Tier 4 for a short time and then eased again- slightly! It has been so good to see volunteers slowly returning. Unfortunately, some of our long-term volunteers will not be returning. We wish them well in the days to come.



During the four months lock down last year small groups, working on three half days a week, were able to propagate thousands of tube stock in readiness for this coming year. For various reasons some species are lacking. These will be recorded as back orders in the hope that we can assist in the coming months.

Thanks to an ease in COVID-19 constraints during November and December, seed collectors were able to add to our seed bank. This will be of great help to our production later in the year.

Over the past few weeks, orders have been assembled in the hope that limited advisory committee working bees will return. Thank you all for your continued support.



Newly elected Cr. Trudy Skilbeck recently spent a morning at the nursery displaying a very keen interest in the aims and work of Bungalook. Even with the heaviest rain in months and restriction on the numbers allowed in the potting shed there was much enthusiastic interaction about plant



production, volunteers and particularly the new Urban Forest Strategy.

*These photos were taken when mask restrictions had been eased.*

**Hours and production** certainly reflect volunteers slowly returning.

	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021
Hours	232.75	232.75	304.05
Production	2,216	3,142	2,609

Again, thank you to the volunteers who formed a skeleton staff over many months in 2020.

Margaret Witherspoon - 24 February 2021. Photos Margaret Witherspoon.

## New Website

<http://www.wcipp.org.au/>

Given the difficulties under COVID-19 lockdown a small working group guided by John McMahan met via zoom once a week, building the new website. In addition, there were many others who contributed valuable information, photos, and insights. This was a huge effort, and we believe the site will provide users with a fresh perspective on Bungalook Nursery and the work undertaken by a dynamic and dedicated group of volunteers. You will see a full list of plants grown, comprehensive information on those plants and their value to the environment. We have sections on the objectives, the history and future direction of the Nursery.

You will also see a comprehensive set of links to useful information including past newsletters, a news blog, the location of the City of Whitehorse Bushland Parks, local environment organisations and resources. Some sections still leave room for further development, work that will be seen too over time. There is still much to be done.

Finally released online on 28 January the response has been so satisfying and it would seem appreciated. Go to <http://www.wcipp.org.au/> for a whole new learning experience.

Margaret Witherspoon

## Urban Forest Strategy

A council initiative, a new Urban Forest Strategy was first introduced to interested parties in December 2020 via a zoom meeting. In January, a draft document was then distributed, among others, to the president of the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society who urged those who had participated in the zoom meeting and as many other contacts as possible to offer comments and feedback. Extremely thoughtful contributions were forwarded to both Millie Wells (Senior Environmental Advisor), and Belinda Moodie (Tree Project program) ParksWide, City of Whitehorse, both from individuals as well as on our behalf. It would seem there is overwhelming concern about the loss of tree canopy, the difficulty in maintaining bushland parks, the

encouragement of nature strip plantings, climate change and its effect on our overall vegetation and financial implications.

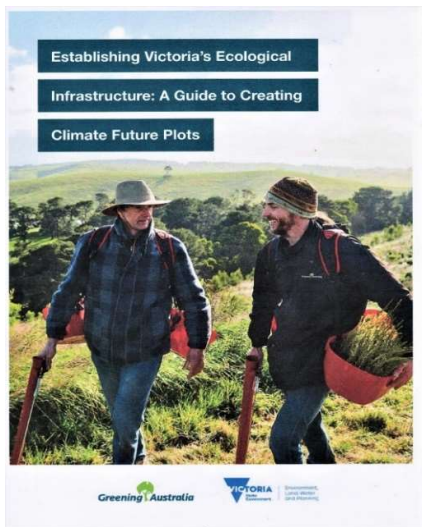
Although past the date for submissions please take the time to read.

<https://oursay.org/whitehorsecitycouncil/whitehorseurbanforest-1>

In addition, members of the community are encouraged to submit a photo of a favourite tree.

Margaret Witherspoon

## Provenance and related issues



On 15 February John McMahon (Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee representative on the WCIPP committee) challenged us with a document *Establishing Victoria's Ecological Infrastructure; A Guide to Creating Climate Future Plots*.

[https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GA0012\\_Climate-Plots-Documents\\_SMALLER-SINGLE.pdf](https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GA0012_Climate-Plots-Documents_SMALLER-SINGLE.pdf)

Again, this was forwarded to committee and volunteers for comment. A quick response from volunteers could well form the basis for future decisions for council, community nurseries and home gardeners.

Articles on both the above topics which are intertwined of course will appear in our forthcoming Newsletter/s.

See below for an introductory article on our provenance working group.

## New volunteers

With the return to a relatively unrestricted operation following our Covid-19 experience we welcomed some five new volunteers in recent weeks. It is really pleasing to have new people join us to help with the many aspects of running the nursery and for existing volunteers to pass on some of their skills, or learn from those new volunteers.

We have also lost a number of long term and dedicated volunteers in recent times. Thank you all for your work over the years and for your dedication to our aim to provide indigenous plants for the area.

## Bungalook working groups

The recent Bungalook Committee meeting discussed and established two working groups

These informal groups are to consider:

**Finance.** John Rogan, our treasurer, with others are looking at potential expenditure at the nursery. We are seeking ideas on how the nursery could for example improve its operations, enhance volunteer experience, provide additional equipment, undertake significant maintenance or replacement or provide training. All ideas would be welcome.

**Genetic diversity and climate change:** Michael Murray has offered to lead this initiative and build on the work done by the 'Indigenous Plants of Whitehorse' working group. The group will consider how to plan for and deal with changing climate, the plants that may grow in the area, where to source those plants if not locally and how to provide habitat suitable for our fauna into the future. This matter also includes where and how the nursery sources its current seeds and cuttings. It is acknowledged that this is a very complex subject with no simple answers. All those interested are encouraged to join the discussion.

## Underneath the benches/ Discoveries in the gravel

Is this the worst job at Bungalook? Surely there is a better way to control weeds under the benches than weeding by hand? For years I had observed, from a distance, some of our volunteers spending hours under the benches helping to make the nursery look well managed. What was the attraction?

Then things changed. We were locked down and most of our regulars couldn't come. Margaret had to prioritize. We were short on stock of several plants and I was asked to search under the benches for *Bursarias* which were in demand but hard to propagate.

What I discovered was a special environment. At first sight crushed rock doesn't have much to offer an emerging seedling, but with assured moisture, shelter and shade the little tackers don't have too much trouble sending their roots through the rocks to get nutrition from the underlying soil. It is true that many weeds do sprout in this benign environment. The usual suspects, Panic veldt, Petty spurge, Winter grass, Flick weed and any of a dozen varieties of thistles thrive here. But among the weeds there are the plants that Liz Henry charmingly described as "promiscuous". Among these I would include the native *Geranium*, *Wahlenbergia gracilis*, *Pelargoniums* and any of the Wallaby grasses. Useful plants can be found here too. The *Bursaria* mentioned previously pops up with reasonable frequency. A 2cm seedling might have a 4cm fleshy root which is easy to transplant. I



have harvested over 50 of these, a useful addition to our production. Similarly, *pelargoniums* can be harvested as can twining *glycine*. To these could be added *Viola betonicifolia*, *Vanilla lily*, and *Acaena*. We also find ferns occasionally, the spores come from the pots containing *Pteris tremula* along the igloo wall.

Next time weeding is needed under the benches, just maybe there is a special plant just waiting to be discovered.

Doug Scott

## City of Whitehorse Sustainability news

Look out for the February /March issue of the Sustainability News.

<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/waste-environment/sustainability> We took the opportunity to gain some publicity.

“Go to the Bungalook Indigenous Plant Nursery Website (<https://www.wcipp.org.au/>), located in Blackburn South. Updated in January, the website provides good photographic and other information on the plants propagated, and guidance on bird and insect attracting species. See the nurseries aims, the things volunteers do and enjoy and the origin of the nursery. Open the list of useful links to our bushland parks, other associations and resources for specialists.

In spite of Covid-19, the nursery has rebuilt its plant range and is there to help with your indigenous plant questions and supplies. “

## Blackburn Lake Sanctuary news

### Whitehorse Council upgrade of the Visitor Centre

Over the past few months there has been much beavering away by workers at the Visitor Centre to replace the roof and decking in the Courtyard area. This will provide more covered space for visitors and accommodate school groups in the Whitehorse Environmental Education Program.

Steve Day and his team from Parkswide are almost ready to start the landscaping there and this will continue around the Visitor centre into Juby’s Garden.

While Juby’s garden is used in the Education Program, to demonstrate how indigenous plants were used by the First People, it will also eventually become a self-guided walk for visitors to the Sanctuary.

Once Whitehorse Council have completed the work, it is hoped that the Visitor Centre will once again be open to the public on Sunday afternoons and of course, for use in the Education Program.

Events coming up:

- **A talk & walk on our native water rats – the Rakali. 2pm 21<sup>st</sup> March at the Visitor Centre.**
- **Autumn bird survey – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April. Meet at the Visitor Centre at 7.30 for 8am start.**

### Environmental Education Officer

The replacement Environmental Education Officer has still not been advertised, but Tanveer Alvi who has been assisting past Education Officer, Lisa Moloney, is doing a sterling job of keeping the program going at Yarran Dheran and Blackburn Lake Sanctuary along with a small group of vols.

### 3-year Litter Reduction Project

In 2017 Melbourne Water was granted funding by the Vic Government to sponsor & consult to community groups working on litter reduction projects in catchments managed by Melbourne Water. Blackburn Lake Sanctuary was the pilot project, of which there are now 15.

Each year tonnes of litter makes its way from waterways to bays and oceans. Looped items, plastics, polystyrene are just a few of the items that have a detrimental effect on freshwater and marine wildlife around Melbourne.

Blackburn Lake is primarily a retarding basin designed to collect and manage stormwater from a large catchment area of 240 hectares.

Litter audits were regularly carried out by volunteers in both commercial and suburban streets in the catchment area. Polystyrene, packaging, and plastics were identified as major pollutants and work is now being carried out to both inform the community and develop strategies to reduce the litter entering the stormwater system, and ultimately ending up in Port Phillip Bay.

**Clean up Australia Day is on March 7<sup>th</sup>.** Resident around the Lake are being encouraged to enlist the help of locals to clean up their streets. Either tally the rubbish collected, send this to [blsac@bigpond.com](mailto:blsac@bigpond.com) and then bin it or bring it along to Blackburn Lake Sanctuary litter collection during the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> March, and it will be added to the tally there.

And lastly ..... the Advisory Committee are still hoping to hold our **Annual Friends luncheon on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April**. So, keeping everything crossed!! Invitations to follow nearer the time.

Anne Payne



Cootamundra Walk Advisory Committee presents...

 **Music in the Park** 

Friday 12 March—5:30pm till dusk

Free Event—Live Jazz band  
BYO Picnic Dinner. Easter Egg Hunt.

Participants to adhere to Covid 19 restrictions of the day.  
Refer Facebook group for last minute Covid 19 related changes.  
In the event of a Total Fire Ban, this event will be cancelled.

  **Friends of Cootamundra Walk**  

## Celebrating our Indigenous Nurseries

Whitehorse Trees and Urban Forest Program run by the City of Whitehorse is running an event on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### About this Event

Whitehorse is lucky enough to have 2 community run nurseries propagating indigenous plants that make our suburbs better places to live. This seminar will start with the history and goals of the nurseries. We'll then hear from Greenlink volunteers about their process, challenges and favourite plants. We will finish with a Q&A session.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/celebrating-our-indigenous-nurseries-tickets-141207783281>

*Ed. This program will feature our Bungalook Nursery*

## Autumn Bird Survey in the Blackburn Creeklands



Photo: Ruth Ault

The **Blackburn Creeklands** is working hard to get its Autumn and Spring Bird Surveys going again in 2021 - after both events had to be cancelled last year due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Blackburn Creeklands is blessed with an amazing diversity of native birdlife – more than 90 species of residents and visitors have been identified.

If you'd like to see how Bungalook's plants have been put to good use to encourage indigenous birdlife, please feel very welcome to come along to the **Autumn Survey on Saturday, 24th April**.

We will meet early at the Scout Hall in Pakenham Street, Blackburn and be led by our fantastic guides **Pat Bingham (Birdlife Australia)** and **Ian Moodie (City of Whitehorse)**.

No prior knowledge or experience is necessary!

For further information: please visit: <https://blackburncreeklands.wordpress.com/activities/bird-counts/>

John McMahon

## Overlooking the grasslands – ABC Podcast

Follow the link for this interesting article on the state of our grasslands in southern Australia.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/overlooking-the-grasslands/13164414>

## Excess stock at Bungalook Nursery

Through a variety of factors, and particularly Covid-19, operating the nursery with a very limited staff number due to the restrictions over recent months and changes of volunteers the stock levels of some species became out of balance.

Whilst we are short of a few species, we now have excess stock of other species and hope to move those stocks as soon as possible. If any species in the list below are on or could be on your wish list, please call in or contact us.

<b>Acacias</b>	A.mearnsii	A.dealbata
	A.melanoxyton	A.myrtifolia
<b>Allocasuarina</b>	A.littloralis	
<b>Eucalyptus</b>	E.macrorhyncha	E.obliqua
	E.cephalocarpa	
<b>Billardiera</b>	B.mutabilis	
<b>Bulbine</b>	B.bulbosa	
<b>Bursdaria</b>	B.spinosa	
<b>Coprosma</b>	C.quadrifida	
<b>Goodia</b>	G.lotifolia	
<b>Hardenbergia</b>	H.violacea	
<b>Juncus</b>	J.species	
<b>Lomandra</b>	L.longifolia	





**Next Committee Meeting:**

26 May 2021

**Bungalook Nursery Newsletter May 2021 edition:**

We are seeking articles for each edition of the newsletter. Please submit items for the next newsletter by 26 May 2021. Submit to [wcipp@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wcipp@yahoo.com.au) marked for the attention of the newsletter editors.

**Bungalook Nursery Newsletter editors:**

Mark Anderson and Christine Hallam