



# Bungalook News

## Newsletter of the

Whitehorse Community Indigenous Plant Project Inc.

Issue No 77      June - July 2021

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As we leave the colourful Autumn months, the season of early winter according to the Middle Yarra Timelines calendar, the bright sun and the recent warm days have just been dispatched with cold fronts, strong winds and more rain, and we realize that deep winter is now upon us. There are bright spots to look out for though. You will begin to see some different plants come into flower, for example the purple flowered Hardenbergia violacea (Purple Coral Pea), the Silver wattles (Acacia dealbata) that give us glimpses of colour and the Yellow box (Eucalyptus melliodora) will be in flower and providing food for many avian species. Herbs, fungi and orchids can now be found.



We all know the Melbourne weather coming up will predominantly be cold and wet with dark clouds and wisps of mist in the treetops but with occasional clear days. The days are short, the light is dim. You may wake to a silver sheen of frost on your lawn. Some of us will have escaped to the north for warmer weather, hoping the border does not close before we come home. Look out and listen for some of our wetland, woodland and grassland bird species. Many will start their courtship displays and behaviours and the collection of nesting materials. Territories will be squabbled over with some noise. If you wonder what that conspicuous call is, try downloading the [BirdNet](#) app to your phone, record and analyse.

The nursery will, subject to Covid restrictions, run as usual with many tasks for the time of year. For those who work inside, the heater will be on while many other tasks are done quietly outside in the background. This newsletter will provide information on Autumn Activities we undertook at Bungalook including a walk to Valley Reserve accompanied by Ian Moodie, as well as some activities running in our bushland parks. To find out more about opportunities to get involved, go to our [website](#) for the links. For those who have been following the Whitehorse Urban forest strategy development, a response is included in this issue. See where some of our plants went to in Mitcham and where they were planted out by a local scout group. Share in the joy of other young scouts in Nunawading as they learnt to take and care for cuttings and finally, keep alert for little surprises like the Green-blotched moth spotted nearby.

### Autumn Activities in the Nursery

Despite the fact that we had the gates locked for months on end and working with only a handful of volunteers all in masks, the nursery still managed to produce thousands of trees, bushes, ground covers and grasses. Although many species could not be propagated, we're now in the position to fill many of the great orders that we have been lucky enough receive. Thank you to those who have shown such understanding when we have not been able to supply some species for your planting projects. And isn't it good to be back in the parks after last year! Certainly, the weeds got out of hand in some areas, as usual you might say, but working bees in many of our parks have tackled these with enthusiasm.

Sunny planting days with good following rains have meant a great start to this year's projects.



*Left: Peter and Christine with plants for Blackburn Lake Sanctuary.*

*Above right: Anthony, Sam and Vic loading up hundreds of plants for a revegetation project around the Heatherdale Scout Hall. Great community effort. More reports later in this Newsletter.*

### **New Volunteers**



*New skills – Jaliya*

New volunteers have joined those who have returned with enthusiasm, especially for our Wednesday morning activities. Some species which should have been propagated early summer are still being tubed up. Maybe they will sit for a while and then shoot away ready for spring.



*and Trish preparing cuttings.*



## Greenhood Orchids



One of our great successes over the past few months has been the propagation of some greenhood orchids. Grown from small clusters, we now have enough tubes to be passed on to keen gardeners to establish in their own gardens. Loss of these fabulous species has been notable in some parks and of course where multiple housing estates cover what were single house lots.

### Updated signage

Thank you, Mark for improvements to our signs and labels. We aim to assist finding stock in the nursery for both customers and volunteers as easy as possible.



### We're back

Thank you to our volunteers with a noticeable increase in both the propagation figures and hours spent supporting the nursery both on site, either at home or collecting plant material.

	Feb	March	April	Total
Hours	317.50	406.00	418.75	1142.25
Propagation	1033	1936	1735	4704



## National Volunteers Week

On Monday 17 June the mayor of the City of Whitehorse Cr. Andrew Munroe, councillors and staff, hosted a scaled down COVID-safe celebration to recognise volunteers within our city.

National Volunteers Week (NVW) is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteers. From Monday 17th to Sunday 23rd May 2021, NVW celebrated the significant contribution of Australia's almost six million volunteers. Each year the volunteers dedicate over 600 million hours to help

others

*Cr. Prue Cutts, centre, with Margaret (Cootamundra Walk and Bungalook) and Anne Payne OAM (Blackburn Lake Sanctuary and Bungalook).*

Margaret Witherspoon 26 May 2021

## A walk in VALLEY RESERVE, MT.WAVERLEY

Bungalook members walked through this fine reserve with Ian Moodie, from ParksWide, Whitehorse



Council, in April, enjoying his expert knowledge on the area, conveyed to us in his inimitable entertaining way.

In the developing suburb of Mt. Waverley 15 hectares was set aside in the 1970's. It has some original bushland intact since settlement which has been extended and enhanced so that much land that was grassed is now covered by valley heathy forest species. There are also some areas of grassy forest and dry sclerophyll forest. In one area the weedy grass has been removed and planted out with *Microlaena*, this soft, short, green weeping

grass being ideal for areas close to houses for a fire break.

Ring tailed Possums, Sugar Gliders and Goulds Wattled Bats inhabit the trees and there are 40 species of birds, including Tawny Frogmouth, Black Cockatoos, King Parrots. Musk lorikeets were among the 12 species of birds we saw and heard during our 1½ hour walk. Blue-tongued Lizards and Common Copperhead snakes live here too.

Scotchmans Creek (swampy riparian habitat) runs through the Reserve but is weed infested and contaminated and in need of attention. However, this would be a complex and expensive task if wildlife and flora are to be protected. A Long-necked Turtle has been seen here, also the elusive Rakali (Water Rat). Four species of amphibians include the Spotted Marsh Frog. Being autumn there were few flowers showing but along the disturbed areas on the edge of Stringybark Track the flat green leaves of developing Blunt and Dwarf Greenhood Orchids (*Pterostylis curta* and *P. nana*) were coming up in profusion, along with the Broad-lipped Bird Orchids (*Chiloglottis trapeziformis*). In 2 to 3 months there will be a fascinating display of these beautiful bush gems. Tall Greenhoods (*Pterostylis longifolia*) grow further in.

Two small Blackwood Wattles (*Acacia melanoxylon*) are home to the Imperial Blue Butterflies and are noticeably defoliated by them. They lay their eggs on these trees and ants farm the caterpillars for the honeydew they secrete. The ants herd the caterpillars up and down the tree and keep off enemy wasps. Even after pupating the butterflies are cared for by the ants. Some time was spent in learning to identify some of the eucalypts, especially Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), fine-leaved with fibrous bark on lower trunk and smooth-barked branches, Messmate (*E. obliqua*) with its offset leaf shape and Red Stringybark (*E. macrorhyncha*) with, as the name suggests, stringy bark all the way up to small branches. Thank you to Ian for a most informative morning. We learned so much.







Picture Titles: 1. Microlaena "lawn" 2. Listening to lan 3. Eucalyptus obliqua 4. Acacia ulicina

Marion Siseman

## Bungalook response to Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy

As we reported in the previous newsletter, Whitehorse City Council is developing a new 10 year Urban Forest Strategy. The strategy explains the value of trees and vegetation and the importance of protecting trees and natural habitats. At present the tree canopy cover is 18% and the central target is to increase tree cover in Whitehorse to 27% by 2031 and to 30% by 2050.

A comprehensive draft strategy was then developed and released, and feedback was requested. A number of our members participated in both sending in feedback and attending the webinar on May 6<sup>th</sup>. This was when Steve Day and the Parks and Natural Environment team presented the Draft Strategy outlining and comprehensively explaining the background, objectives, targets and strategies developed thus far. Issues such as climate change, water use and the current rate of tree and habitat loss were included along with acknowledgement of the central need for long term funding commitments. We would want to commend the staff who have worked hard to set up this strategy and our congratulations to Millie Wells, Coordinator Strategy and Environmental Planning for her effort.

At our quarterly committee meeting we agreed to strongly support it and look forward to Council similarly agreeing to respond positively to this admirable document.

## Landscape planning in Whitehorse

When volunteering in the nursery you will sometimes come across people who are looking for plants to fulfil the requirements of their landscape plan. Landscape plans are often required by Council as a part of a planning permit. Sometimes indigenous plants are preferred for areas that are close to bushland parks, which is wonderful because that supports local biodiversity. However, in many cases the size of the plants specified in the landscape plan is for 6inch pots or advanced trees. This is done because many properties that are developed are going to be sold soon after the development is completed and there is concern that if the plants are smaller, the new owners will not recognise their value and will not care for them.

Customers that require larger pot sizes to comply with a permit have two options. They can purchase the plants from you as tube stock and grow them on themselves. Most people will probably not be too keen on this task or will not have allowed enough time but it is worth suggesting. Their other option is to go back to their planner and seek an amendment or variation to their original permit to allow for smaller plants. Whether their planner supports this or not will depend on each individual case but it is certainly worth suggesting.

When the development is complete, one of the members of the compliance team will check the planting. As we know it can be very difficult to identify some plants when they are young. Please encourage people to keep the labels with the plants. Attaching the labels to stakes would be very helpful for both the Council staff and any potential new owners of the property.

It is not the role of volunteers to negotiate the planning requirements with customers so please ask them to call or email me but I thought it might be worthwhile highlighting why landscape plans are produced and how they are tied to the permits.

Belinda Moody: ph. 0466 556 403 or [Belinda.Moody@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:Belinda.Moody@whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

## Feature Plant

### *Our Feature Plant for Autumn \*\*\*\*Banksia Spinulosa\*\*\*\**



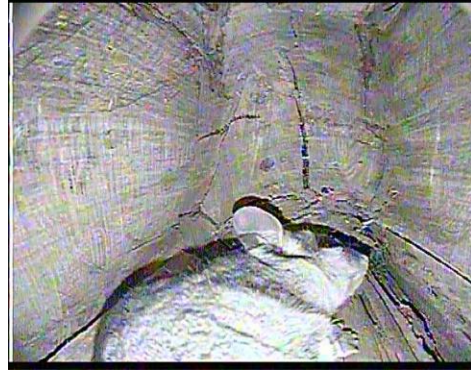
Tucked away in the display garden bordering our nursery, a glowing gem of a flower surprised us this autumn. It is the showy yellow-orange spike of a young Banksia Spinulosa. Planted just two years ago, this plant will grow into a medium sized shrub between 2-4mx2-5m. Banksia Spinulosa loves full sun but can take part shade well. It prefers moist, well-drained soils, but of course being indigenous, will easily manage even the tough clay that we have locally. Birds and bees love this flower which can appear from April through to July. We'd recommend this plant for any feature spot in your garden and it can also thrive in those tough areas where it can take full sun. For more information, check our [website](#), [Whitehorse Council's website](#) or [VICFLORA](#).

## Around the Parks

### What's happening at Yarran Dheran?

#### Who's using the artificial tree hollows?

Council installed 16 artificial tree hollows in Yarran Dheran in 2020 and the committee has been monitoring who is using them since then with much interest. The artificial hollows were installed with the aim of increasing nesting opportunities for eastern rosellas and it was exciting last November to find one of the hollows had four Eastern Rosella chicks inside. It would be good if we find more use being made of these by Eastern Rosellas next spring. In the meantime, sugar gliders have taken up residence in some of the hollows: as these two, found in different hollows a few weeks ago:



### Return of the Tawny Frogmouths

Four Tawny Frogmouths have been roosting near the ponds during May after a long absence.



We'd like to thank Ian Moodie, for the first sighting of the Tawny Frogmouths at the Autumn bird walk.

Yarran Dheran is a great place to see birds. Winter is approaching but birds in Yarran Dheran are still active. The committee conducts monthly bird surveys on the third Thursday of each month. If you'd like to participate, please contact the Secretary at [gay.gallagher@bigpond.com](mailto:gay.gallagher@bigpond.com)



For information about Yarran Dheran or details about events, Visit our website at <https://yarrandherannaturereserve.wordpress.com/> or our facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/YarranDheran>

### Blackburn Lakes City Nature Challenge

Over the weekend of April 30th - May 3rd the City of Whitehorse joined forces with seven other Eastern Melbourne municipal councils and together represented Melbourne in a global event to photograph and record various nature sightings on the [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org/) platform. Several training sessions were conducted so that participants could download and use the iNaturalist app.

It was great to see so many citizen scientists taking part, and in doing so, learning so much from the experts at various activities throughout the City and other municipalities. These included moths & other nocturnal creatures, nature discovery walks, water bug identification, possum prowls and bird walks.

Bushland park volunteers, members of the Field Nats of Victoria & Bird Life Aust & Ian Moodie led these activities.



It is hoped it will be repeated next year and there is talk of possibly getting involved with the Southern Bio Blitz in September this year. Watch this space for more information.

### **Blackburn Lake Sanctuary**

Sunday June 13th 2 -4pm at the Visitor Centre

Ian Moodie is going to share his observations of Birds & their Nests with a talk and walk.

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary has a large collection of wonderful news to view.



<http://blackburnlakesanctuary.org/rsp-whatson.php>

## **Blackburn Creeklands**

### **What's happening Up the Creek?**

The Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee is very pleased to report that its community-oriented activities are now back in full swing following a sadly empty calendar last year - thanks to Covid-19.

**Monthly Sunday Community Working Bees** resumed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May under a COVIDSafe Plan. These



events typically include planting, weeding and associated tasks. Our next working bee in honour of **World Environment Day** will be held on **Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> June**. We'll be restoring some under-story and mid-story along the creek under some magnificent eucalypts. The following one, in honour of **NAIDOC Week**, will be **Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> July**. All are welcome! Work is also progressing on organising regular litter collection working bees as well.

The first **Autumn Bird Survey** for two years was held on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> April. Although the sky was overcast, the other weather conditions were good and one of our survey

groups was rewarded with a sighting of a **Superb Fairy Wren** feeding on insects. This was the first sighting of that species for decades in the Creeklands! Plants sourced from Bungalook used to restore suitable habitat are, no doubt, one of the prime reasons the wrens are beginning to return to the Creeklands again. Our next family-friendly **Spring Bird Survey** will be in **October**. Regular monthly bird surveys are also being conducted by a more scientifically oriented group.

The Creekies are also pleased that Whitehorse Council's engineers have assured them that the impacts of the **Main Street bridge replacement** on the park (July-December) will be smaller than feared with only one significant path diversion required.

If you'd like more information, please e-mail [BlackburnCreeklands@gmail.com](mailto:BlackburnCreeklands@gmail.com) or visit:

<https://blackburncreeklands.wordpress.com/> .



## Propagating with 1<sup>st</sup> Nunawading Scouts

In March this year WCIPP was invited by Ariel Liu, from the 1<sup>st</sup> Nunawading Scout group, to help teach how to propagate indigenous plants as part of a Junior Landcare funded project.



On the night, Margaret introduced indigenous plants with their propagating requirements, and it was evident that the young listeners were keen to learn what they could. Next, on adjourning outside, we found Ariel had



prepared workstations for the group of approximately 26 young people who were eager to get into the practicalities as each had two tubes to fill. The resulting boxes of cuttings were watered and will be planted out into their developing bush and edible food garden near the adjoining

reserve, which is where the plant cuttings for the evening were sourced, those bushes having originally come from Bungalook. After the serious work of cutting and propagating, Ariel had then organized for the group to make seed-bombs, another planting type activity involving lots of lovely mud and clay and seeds which was predictably done with great enthusiasm by the young participants. Our thanks and appreciation to Ariel for organizing this project and to all the leaders and scouts at 1<sup>st</sup> Nunawading. Their ongoing work and care for their local environment, indigenous plants and local edible bushfood are truly commendable.

Christine Hallam

## Planting with 1<sup>st</sup> Heatherdale Scouts

It was a great sunny planting day on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> May and it resulted in just over 1300 plants/scrubs/trees going into the ground around our 1<sup>st</sup> Heatherdale Scout hall. Plants were purchased from Bungalook, which was possible because we had successfully applied for a Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity 2020 grant.



This project provided a fantastic opportunity to bring our Scout Hall up to scratch in aesthetics within its current location in Heatherdale Creeklands near Somers Trail and hopefully enhances connectivity with the local fauna and flora.

Joeys, Cubs and Scouts were asked to be heavily involved in the whole project with four working bees in total so far. Three have been cleaning/ site prep and spreading mulch and the last was a planting day, in which 60 people (small to big) turn up from 9am through to 2.30pm. (On a side note,

this will be used to work toward their Junior Landcare badge).





Bungalook will supply the remainder of the plants in the coming months. Another small planting day will be needed at some point.

We are now looking forward to future planting, which we hope will take place within close proximity to both the Scout Hall and nature reserve area around the Scout Hall in conjunction with the Friends Groups from the

local area.

Sam Bigelow, 1st Heatherdale Scouts



## More Bungalook Indigenous plants head off to new places



The Mitcham Angling Club had decided to plant out their garden in native indigenous plants and after a grant and advice from the Whitehorse Council, consulted with Margaret at the local indigenous plant nursery. We placed an order and were advised to collect the plants in the autumn. With the onset of covid I collected the 300 plants and a working bee by members ensured the plants were hastily planted on the last Saturday before Covid restrictions. Luckily, it rained Sunday night and we were not to see the garden again for months. Some plants did extremely well; others were not

so successful. The growth over the year was varied. I noticed that plants planted in soil that had previously been worked as a veggie garden thrived as well as the plants in a rose garden area. The photo attached of the creeper Purple Coral-pea shows the difference. The smaller ones were planted directly into the existing clay and even though have survived have failed to grow quickly compared to this plant that has already been pruned. Dichondra repens have successfully spread as well. So, in hindsight had we not had to rush the plantings because of Covid, I would recommend that the area to be planted is dug over and mulch spread prior to planting and perhaps a light application of a suitable native fertilizer. Margaret and her team at Bungalook were most helpful. I also recommend reading a copy of the Indigenous Gardening in Whitehorse Booklet



Ian McKay, Mitcham Angling Club,

5 Brunswick Road, Mitcham



## Surprise finding

While weeding my little nature strip garden a few days ago a flutter alerted me to this little fellow. With its striking markings I thought it might have been something special. A search on Google for Australian moths didn't produce any definitive results so I referred my query to the "experts" at



Bungalook. Everyone was fascinated but there was no positive identification. Mark suggested I try iNaturalist so I downloaded the app and submitted the photo. I don't know if there was a real person at the other end or whether there was some fancy algorithm which analysed the photo, but the response was instantaneous! The little fellow is *Cosmodes elegans*, otherwise known as the Green-Blotched moth (this name sounds much nicer).

It seems *Cosmodes elegans* is widespread on the entire East coast, Norfolk Island and New Zealand. There is no indication of its rarity so how come I haven't seen one before!!! Doug Scott

## Biggest Morning Tea for Cancer

**June 18th**

Join us for our Biggest Morning Tea for Cancer supporting the Anti Cancer Council. Reminders and details will be sent out again before the event. The event will be subject to Covid restrictions.

**Next Committee Meeting:** 25th Aug 2021

**Bungalook Nursery Newsletter 78 Sept 2021 edition:**

We are seeking articles for each edition of the newsletter. Please submit items for the next newsletter by 20<sup>th</sup> August 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

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