

banksia

bulletin

autumn 2020

**Invertebrates
in Bayside**

**Enamelled
spider spotting**

**Tulip Street
Pond refill**



Bayside
CITY COUNCIL

From the Mayor

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *Banksia Bulletin*.

I would like to thank our Friends groups, volunteers and environmental advocates for their patience and understanding as we all navigate these uncertain times.

With social distancing measures enforced around Victoria, we have had to make changes to the way we care for our natural environment.

Working bees are currently suspended for groups, however, I thank the volunteers who have adapted to these new conditions and continue to maintain our reserves and heathlands in a way that adheres to social distancing rules.

It is great to hear also that Friends groups are staying in touch via social media and participating in online meetings, which has become the new norm across Council also.

While we have had to postpone the opening of our Bayside Community Nursery until further notice, we are working closely with Citywide to promote wholesale orders so that we can distribute as much stock as possible, particularly as many people are home tending to their homes and gardens.

Volunteering is as much about the socialisation as it is about the task at hand and I am sure you are all looking forward to catching up in the open spaces you care so much about.

As like-minded individuals who come together under the banner of Friends groups to care and protect our natural environment, we will be back together soon and I look forward to being able to gather in our beautiful parks and open spaces in the near future.

Stay healthy and look after one another.



Cr Clarke Martin
Mayor
Bayside City Council



Cover image: Native Violet (*Viola hederacea*)
by Pauline Reynolds



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Bayside Community Nursery

RE-OPENING MAY 2020

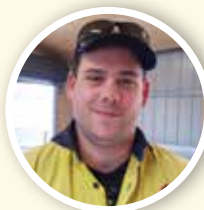
The Bayside Community Nursery is expected to re-open in May.

The April 2020 opening date was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Council is finalising arrangements that adhere to social distancing rules that will keep our staff, volunteers and visitors safe.

The date will be confirmed soon and posted on Council's website.





Plants of Bayside

With Aaron Hurrell of
Citywide Parks and Gardens

White Correa

The White Correa (*Correa alba*) is a dense spreading shrub that grows to between 0.5 and 2m high and 1-3m wide.

Its grey-green leaves are velvety and paler on the underside and grow to 1.5-4cm by 6-25mm in an elliptical shape with white flowers of around 2cm each. This plant is adaptable to moist, well-drained soils but can handle dry periods and lots of moisture once established. It prefers full sun to semi-shade and will grow from seeds and cuttings.

A coastal plant, the White Correa makes a beautiful hedge as it responds well to pruning. Early settlers used the leaves to help smoke food and as a tea substitute.

Source Bull, Marilyn (1991) *Flora of Melbourne: A guide to the indigenous plants of the greater Melbourne area* Carlton Vic: Hyland House Publishing



Council has adopted a new masterplan to guide the historic transformation of Elsternwick Park golf course into a natural oasis on our City's doorstep.

The new Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve will bring nature back into our urban area, providing refuge and tranquillity for both wildlife and people.

Key proposed elements include a 'chain of ponds', expanded wetlands, grassy woodland and visitor facilities such as Indigenous gathering places and a gateway feature building at the northern end of the reserve adjacent to Nepean Highway.

Bayside Mayor Cr Clarke Martin said the plan was strongly influenced by feedback.

The masterplan adopted by Council creates a blueprint for the nature reserve with four key objectives:

- Protect the natural environment and encourage biodiversity
- Community and visitor facilities
- Improving water quality in Elster Creek and Port Phillip Bay
- Reduce the risk of flood damage

Register to have your say
Visit yoursay.bayside.vic.gov.au/elsternwick-nature-reserve to view the masterplan and have your say.

Chequered Cuckoo Bee (*Thyreus caeruleopunctatus*)



Cuckoo Bees and Blue-banded Bees at Black Rock

By John Eichler

An attractive powder blue and black coloured Chequered Cuckoo Bee, *Thyreus caeruleopunctatus*, spent at least three nights in my Black Rock garden during December 2019. It would arrive at around 5.30pm, latch onto a fine, bare twig with its jaws, raise its legs and remain there until after the sun reached its resting spot the next morning.

Thyreus are parasites (or more correctly, parasitoids) of Blue-banded Bees, *Amegilla* sp. They enter and lay eggs in the nesting burrows, mostly constructed in soil, of Blue-banded Bees. The Blue-banded Bee egg or larva is killed and the Cuckoo Bee larva consumes the food resource that had been deposited in the nest by the adult Blue-banded Bee.

While I have not seen Blue-banded Bees in my garden this season they do visit most years, having a preference for blue coloured flowers. During the warmer months of 2015/16 Blue-banded Bees were frequent visitors, with up to 11 spending the night clinging to Kangaroo Grass stems in January. I also observed Chequered Cuckoo Bees in the garden on several occasions that season.



Blue-banded Bees (*Amegilla* sp.)



Tulip Street Pond refilled from local pool

On Sunday 22 December, the Sandringham Family Leisure Centre pool was drained to allow routine maintenance, painting and structural investigation.

The emptying of the pool would normally be discharged into the stormwater system, however this year Council found a more sustainable use – refilling Tulip Street Pond.

This pond, located in the small reserve adjacent to the Sandringham Family Leisure Centre, is normally filled via stormwater.

At the time, the pond was completely dry due to the lack of rain. An ecological fauna and flora study found that the pool water would be suitable for the pond environment if the chlorine levels could be significantly reduced. The Friends of Native Wildlife Inc. (FoNW Inc.) supported the initiative, pending acceptable chlorine levels in the pool water could be reached prior to emptying.

The pool filter was turned off a few days prior to draining the pool to ensure chlorine levels dropped to an acceptable level, and water testing on the morning confirmed these levels had been achieved.

Commencing at midday, pumping the pool water into the pond was completed by evening.

By mid-January 2020, wildlife had returned to the pond.

More and more birds have been attracted to the pond including two species of native duck – Pacific Black Duck and Wood Duck – that have already been

spotted enjoying the water at the location, both with ducklings in tow.

A pair of Bronzewing pigeons, which are uncommon in Bayside, have also been seen enjoying the tranquillity around the pond, as well as the return of Pobblebonk and Spotted Marsh frogs to their home, who have been heard croaking in celebration.



(L-R) Civil Projects Engineer Jalpan Desai worked with Damian Carr from the Open Space team on the Landcox Park lake project.

Replenishing Landcox Park Lake

Story supplied by Bayside City Council

Council has successfully re-directed stormwater destined for the drainage system, and ultimately Port Phillip Bay, into the lake at Landcox Park in Brighton East.

Around 40,000 litres of water from two underground detention tanks at Hawthorn Road were discharged by Citywide into the lake instead of stormwater.

This assisted in replenishing the lake, which is home to native long-necked tortoises.

This is a great example of Council's commitment to sustainable decision-making, and finding better ways.

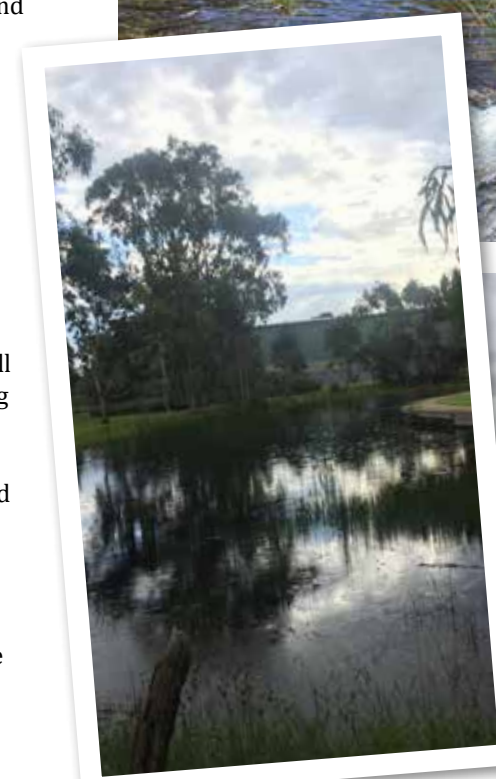
Even some Wood Ducks from the neighbouring Sandringham Golf Course have wandered over to the pond with around 40 spotted in early January enjoying the peace as they rested on the southern grassy patch. A White-faced Heron was also sighted at the pond during February.

It is exciting to see the Tulip Street Pond refill has brought wildlife back to the area.

The proposed new building to accommodate four additional basketball courts to be built adjacent to the pond area has been designed to send stormwater from the expansive roof area into the pond which will replenish the pond on an ongoing basis.

Council and FoNW Inc. will continue to monitor the pond and its new and returning wildlife.

A community weeding and planting day is planned for later in the year to further restore surrounding habitat. Keep an eye on Council's website and FoNW Facebook page for future details.



Update on a thriving reserve

Story and photos by Pauline Reynolds
Co-convenor George Street Reserve

George Street Reserve Friends Group was lucky to have had a working bee on 15 March (the Ides of March, which would be an omen as it turned out), just before all volunteer activities had to cease for the foreseeable future due to Victorian Government restrictions for COVID-19.

It was a beautiful autumn day and, as far as we knew then, the planned burn of 4000 square metres would take place on 7 April, so we were weeding in that area.

With all the rain this year, everything has grown madly and some of the weeds are seeding for a second time.

We are very pleased to have three new volunteers – two of whom are teenagers – Julie, Alaska and Max join the group. The dynamic of the working party has changed with their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. They are great fun and wonderful workers!

It was decided to postpone the burn because of the necessity of physical distancing and the public concern about the smoke at this time.

With luck, the burn can take place in spring. The previous two wildfires have occurred in November with very good results. Citywide may have to slash again though because everything is growing so lushly. Realistically, it was too damp to burn that week anyway! Everyone hopes that it won't have to be delayed for another year. It's turned out to be a big challenge.

I've had a few walks around the reserve recently; comments from some of the other walkers have been really interesting and supportive of both the decision to burn and the decision to delay. It's good to chat with them and to hear their understanding of what the conservation of George Street Reserve is about.



Coast Manna Gum
(*Eucalyptus viminalis* ssp. *pryoriana*)



Common Beard Heath
(*Leucopogon virgatus*)



Common Flat Pea
(*Platylobium obtusangulum*)



Nodding Green Hoods (*Pterostylis nutans*)

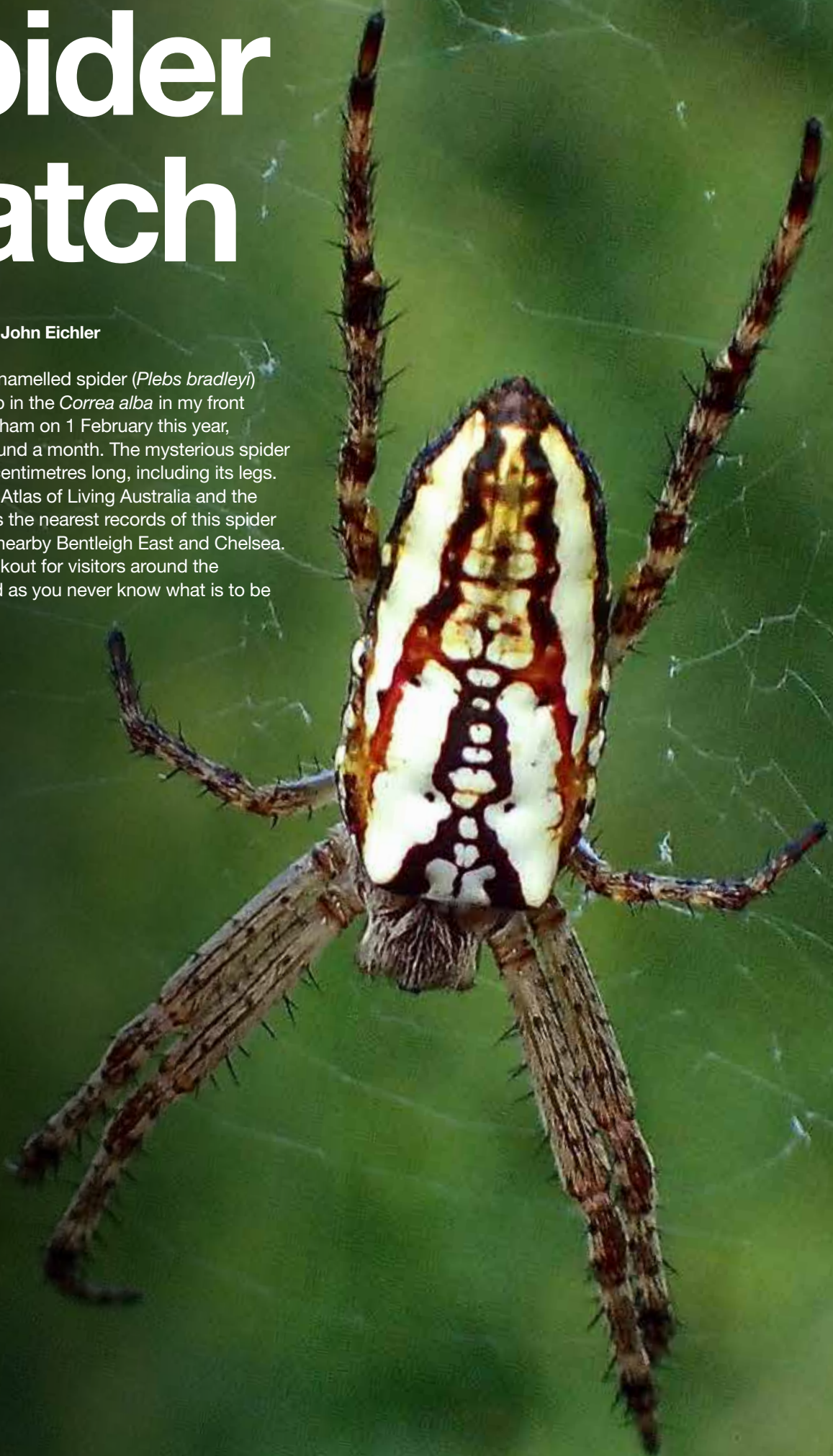
Spider watch

Story and photo by John Eichler

I first noticed the Enamelled spider (*Plebs bradleyi*) in an elaborate web in the *Correa alba* in my front garden in Sandringham on 1 February this year, where it sat for around a month. The mysterious spider was around three centimetres long, including its legs.

According to the Atlas of Living Australia and the iNaturalist websites the nearest records of this spider previously were in nearby Bentleigh East and Chelsea.

So, be on the lookout for visitors around the garden or bushland as you never know what is to be discovered.



Visit from NSW

By Pauline Reynolds

We were pleased to welcome a visit from two Penrith City Council (western Sydney) staff to our Bayside Community Nursery where we discussed how it operates and the role of volunteers.

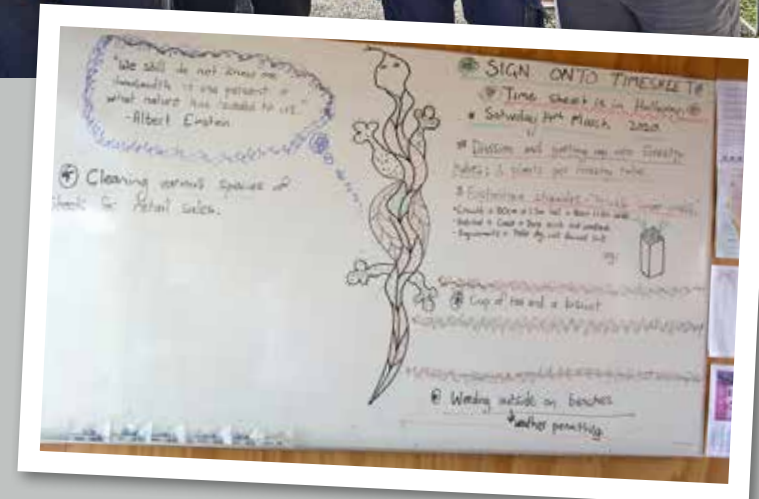
In a follow-up email, City Presentation – Operations Coordinator Murray Halls said they enjoyed discussing our wonderful nursery including the special role that volunteers play.

“Everything comes together ... to create the highly-valued community facility for the residents of Bayside,” he said.

“Our plan here at Penrith is to redevelop our existing nursery facility so that it provides a range of plant production services for a variety of existing and future key Council programs and capital projects.

“We are excited about what is possible and seeing firsthand the facility at Bayside gives us a glimpse of that future.”

We are always pleased to share our passion and knowledge.



Rakali and the Year of the Rat

By Elizabeth Walsh

Photo supplied by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

A warm and calm Friday evening at the Brighton pier in January was the perfect way to celebrate and welcome in the Year of the Rat.

The annual Summer by the Sea program and FoNW Inc. brought the life and history of local water mammal, Rakali (*Hydromys chrysogaster*), to life.

After a wonderful display of antics from our Rakali, our 30 participants enjoyed a beautiful fireworks display to welcome in the Chinese Year of the Rat; a wonderfully orchestrated start to 2020.

Our volunteer group has been promoting local wildlife through surveys and community engagement for 24 years.

This is the second time within a few months that FoNW Inc. has held events with consistent sightings of Rakali at Brighton pier.



Rakali (*hydromys chrysogaster*)



Rakali, like the platypus, are highly adapted to aquatic life. They are thickly furred mammals with partially webbed hind feet. They seek most of their food under water eating crustaceans, fish,

worms, crabs and yabbies whilst diving in either fresh or salt water, but will scavenge on land. Although seen on land during daylight hours, they are mostly sighted from dusk to dawn around lakes, rivers and our local rocky foreshore areas.

For many years there were more sightings at Sandringham pier, but recent reformation work on the outside of the breakwater and harbour dredging appears to have altered life within this area.

Invertebrates

at Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary

While the birds and plants of Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary (BRHS) are quite well documented, the same cannot be said about the invertebrate fauna like insects, spiders, scorpions, millipedes, snails and slaters.

Story by John Eichler
Local naturalist

Sue Forster
Convener Friends of Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary

Photos by John Eichler

Common Brown Butterfly, male (*Heteronympha merope*)



Bee Fly (*Villa* sp.)



Dainty Swallowtail Butterfly (*Papilio anactus*)



Weevils (*Pelororhinus* sp.)



Pie-dish Beetle (*Helea* sp.)



Robber Fly (*Cerdistus-Neoitamus* complex)

A search of the Atlas of Living Australia and iNaturalist websites reveals a total of only nine invertebrate records from this important reserve.

In an effort to address this, we are visiting the reserve periodically and documenting all invertebrates sighted. This will be done by taking images and identifying and recording what is seen on each visit.

On the first of these visits, 29 January 2020, we recorded 22 species of invertebrates.

Indigenous species included:

- Bee Fly and Robber Fly
- Common Gea and Sooty Orbweaver spiders
- Pie-dish, Darkling and Leaf beetles
- Larva of a Cockchafer Beetle
- Fragments of Golden Stag Beetles
- Tyde's Sand Wasp
- Wingless Grasshopper

- Cricket nymph
- Weevil
- Common Rough Woodlouse
- Mealybug
- Dainty Swallowtail Butterfly.

A Cockroach egg sac and the nymph case of a Tube Spittlebug provided evidence of further species.

Records dating back to 2015 also document sightings of the Blue-banded Bee, Thynnid Wasp, Common Brown Butterfly, Geometrid Moth caterpillar, Tiger Fly, Jewel Beetle and the nymphs of Gum Leafhoppers.

Three common introduced species, the Cabbage White Butterfly, European Honey Bee and Centipede (*Lithobius peregrinus*), are regularly found in the reserve.

Invertebrates can be found year round, but are most numerous and conspicuous during the warmer months, particularly when certain plants are in flower. Bees,

flies, butterflies, wasps and some beetles are attracted to flowering plants. Less conspicuous are the many types of bugs, the larval stages of moths, butterflies and sawflies that can be found on new leaves.

Other invertebrates are more cryptic. Predators, such as spiders and mantids and parasitic invertebrates, including many wasps and some flies, can be found searching for prey or hiding amongst the vegetation.

Various beetles bore into dead wood and others can be found in decaying wood or under logs. Slaters, scorpions and some spiders also make their homes under logs. Beetles and larger spiders can be common under loose bark.

It is anticipated that future surveys will reveal many more types of the intriguing invertebrates that visit or make BRHS their home.



Chambered Nautilus



Tooth underwater



Toadfish Jaw



Eucalypt leaf

Back to the start of time

A Friends of Native Wildlife Inc. event for 60 'Wild in Bayside' members and friends took guests back in time 5.5 million years to learn about Beaumaris Bay's local fauna and flora on the coast and in the water and air.

Denis Young
Bayside Friends of Native Wildlife Inc.

Guest speaker Murray Orr, President of the Beaumaris Earth Sciences Society, used images of fossils discovered in Beaumaris Bay from his own collection and from Museums Victoria as he recreated Late Miocene Beaumaris in the imaginations of the audience.

The fossil deposits in Beaumaris Bay, both in the water and under the cliffs, are of international significance because of the unique finds from the past few decades.

A three-kilogram tooth from a Giant Sperm Whale (*Livyatan*) found in 2016 created paleontological history as only three such teeth had previously been discovered, all on the west coast of South America.

From examples of fossils such as teeth, parts of various bones, crab bodies, shells, and petrified wood, Murray shared examples of life forms and trees that once lived those millions of years ago on our nearby coast and in adjacent waters. Besides giant whales, various sharks, fish, crabs, megafauna, dolphins, sponges, corals and sea urchins also existed.

Some examples could easily be identified with living relatives today. Others, such as the Giant Sperm Whale, have no near comparison, fortunately for other marine mammals surviving now.

The audience was fascinated to hear of marsupial lions, giant kangaroos and 500-kilogram wombats once roaming the landscape where we now sat in the Beaumaris Community Centre.

Local vegetation was not entirely different from now and recent fossil finds identified from the Casuarina family looked familiar. One really scary specimen took us into the skies and an artist's recreation of a flying Pelagornis had the audience grateful such giant carnivores, with wing spans many times larger than a Wedge-tailed Eagle, are extinct.

Following the talk people viewed the numerous display cases of fossils Murray brought along to share and were able to further deepen their understanding of that distant time in Beaumaris over five million years ago.

Hastalis



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Due to the evolving COVID-19 situation, all working bees and events have been temporarily suspended or postponed until further notice.

Please visit bayside.vic.gov.au or your Friends group Facebook page for updates.



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bulletin

Editorial Policy

The purpose of publishing the Banksia Bulletin is to circulate information, report on events, and to profile relevant environmental issues important to our community. The Bulletin is also published to support the network of people involved in enjoying and protecting our local environment.

Bayside City Council encourages people from our local community groups to submit articles of interest, share experiences and news about any upcoming events. All articles are reviewed prior to publication and Council reserves the right to omit or edit submissions.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the people who have contributed to this issue of Banksia Bulletin.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in the Banksia Bulletin are not necessarily those of Bayside City Council nor its representatives.

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Bayside
CITY COUNCIL

Gum Leafhopper (*Eurymeloides* sp. nymphs)
Photo by John Eichler