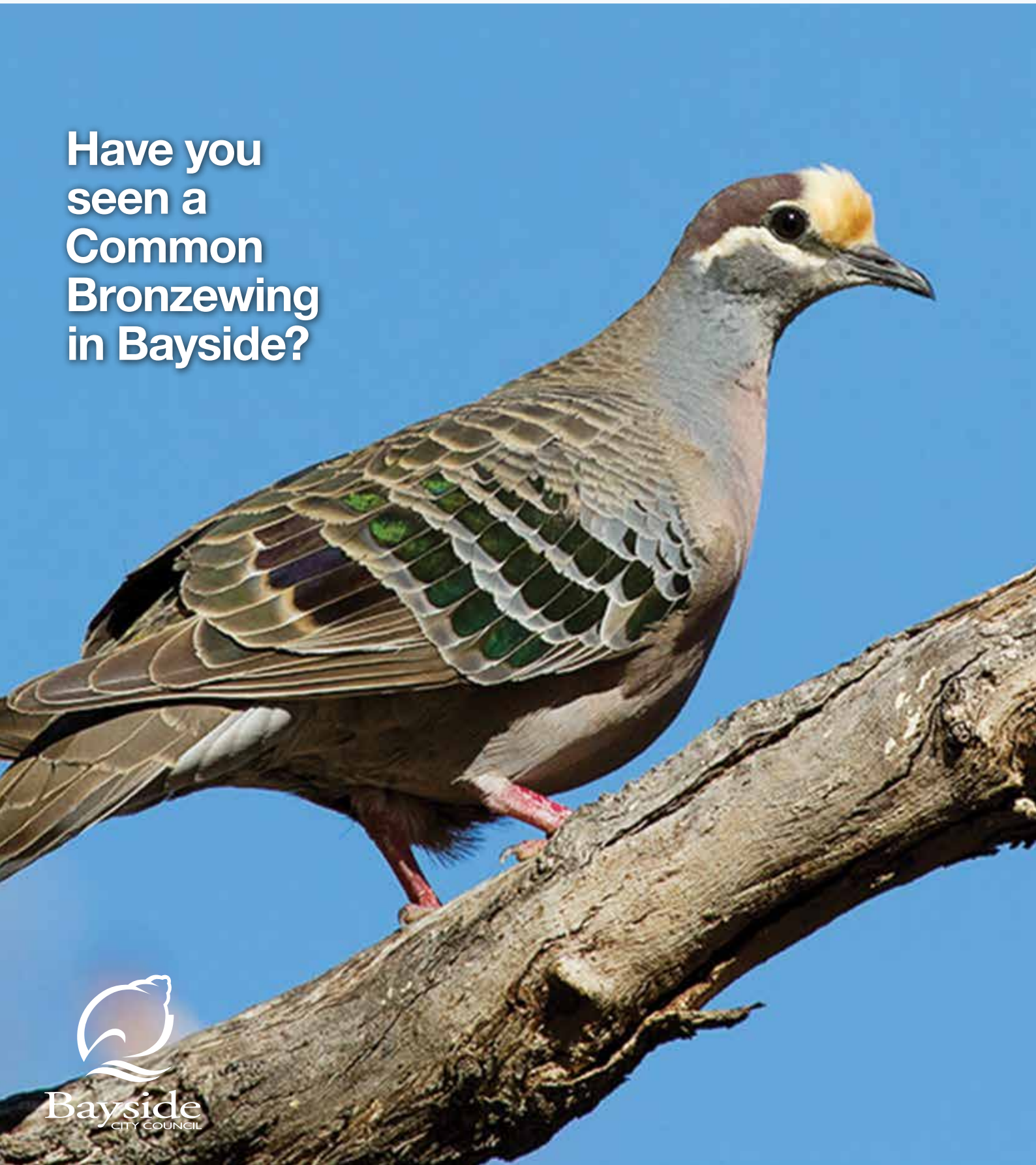
banksia bulletin

autumn/winter 2017

Have you seen a Common Bronzewing in Bayside?



Bayside City Council

From the Mayor

Welcome to winter, Bayside. While the sun may be shining a little less brightly there is still plenty to do in our own backyard.

Winter and spring are great seasons for preparing the garden and planting, and the Bayside Community Nursery is now open for all your indigenous plant needs.

The cooler weather also lends itself to rugging up and joining the Friends groups at various working bees that keep our heathlands and reserves thriving.

We are very pleased to welcome a new Friends group to Bayside. Friends of Bayside Roads' is a new initiative where volunteers are piloting a litter patrol on various routes focusing on streets that surround Bayside's golf courses.

Thank you to Black Rock residents Derek and Lizzie Jones for initiating this new Friends group, which has formed with support from Council and the Royal Melbourne Golf Club (RMGC). A group of volunteers from the RMGC Neighbourhood Players Group were the first to put up their hand and assist Derek in getting the group started. We wish the group the best of luck during the pilot phase.

Our Friends of Bayside Program has been running now for more than 20 years. It started as the Friends of Sandringham back in 1992, which had a focus on protecting pockets of bushlands from undesirable development.

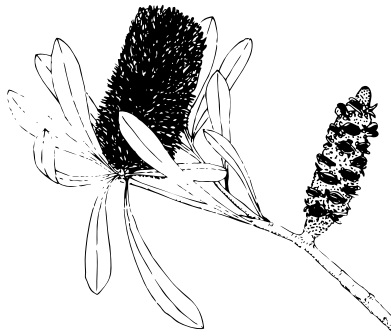
Since amalgamation in 1994, the program has expanded to become the Friends of Bayside, comprising 19 groups that look after patches natural bush and parkland, study our native fauna, and assist at the nursery.

Today, our Friends are key to preserving these areas from the many urban threats such as weed invasion, trampling and pests.

The Friends program continues to flourish and evolve and members expand their positive influence by working with other local environmental volunteers, part of the Bayside Environmental Friends Network (BEFN).

If you would like to find out more about our Friends groups, please contact Council's Friends of Bayside Support Officer Jill Robinson via email, friends@bayside.vic.gov.au

Cr Alex Del Porto
Mayor
Bayside City Council



In this issue

Special features

Other articles

To get back in season, *Banksia Bulletin* has combined its Autumn and Winter editions for 2017. Our seasons became a little behind after Council elections in October last year delayed the production of our Spring 2016 edition. We apologise if this has caused any inconvenience, however, we are pleased to be back on track!

Plants of Bayside

With Aaron Hurrell of Citywide Parks and Gardens

Large Kangaroo Apple

(Solanum laciniatum)

The Kangaroo Apple makes for a nice screening plant or a filler plant while waiting for something that grows slowly, to get bigger.

It is an erect, short-lived and fast growing shrub belonging to the Solanaceae family, which also includes tomatoes and nightshades.

Growing between 1-3 metres high by 1-3 metres wide, this shrub's stems can be purplish in colour with either broadly ovate or irregularly lobed leaves.

The flowers range in colour from blue to purple and appear between September and March.

The fruit also range in form, from egg-shaped (ovoid) to ellipsoid (a closed circle shape that is flat) and are orange in colour when fully ripe. Boon Wurrung people were known to eat the fruit. However, the immature fruit is toxic when eaten and should be avoided.

The Large Kangaroo Apple is found in a variety of different ecological areas. They do require moderate to well-drained soil and can tolerate full sun and semi shade to dappled shade.

It is known as a colonising plant, meaning it is often one of the first to regenerate from fire and other disturbances, usually from underground stems and seed.

Kangaroo Apples are often used as a primary coloniser plant at revegetation sites as its fruit attracts birds, which in turn spread the Kangaroo Apple seeds or any other seeds the bird may have already eaten. The more mature and large Kangaroo Apples also form protection for some of the more slowly growing secondary and tertiary revegetation plants.

The large Kangaroo Apple has been harvested for the chemical compound solasodine, which is used in birth control medication.

Visit the Bayside Community Nursery where the Kangaroo Apple can now be purchased.

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

Donald MacDonald Reserve's controlled burn

By Jo Hurse
Citywide Parks and Gardens

A controlled ecological burn at Donald MacDonald Reserve in Beaumaris was conducted by Citywide Service Solutions in April.

Ecological burning is an annual activity that the Bushland Crew from Citywide manage for Bayside City Council.

Ecological burns often stimulate growth of wildflowers and orchids in the burn site, creating a great deal of excitement among community groups. Fire and smoke stimulate the soil stored seed causing it to germinate and grow.

Ecological burns are known to be highly beneficial to many Australian ecosystems. This is particularly relevant to the heathland vegetation communities of which Donald MacDonald Reserve is a part.

In many cases, plants from heathland vegetation communities require fire to survive. Without the natural fire regime to stimulate plant cycles these vegetation communities can senesce and die, causing a drop in plant diversity.

Historically, there have been two prior controlled ecological burns conducted at Donald MacDonald Reserve.

The first, fronting onto Fourth Street, was undertaken in 1997. In 2004, a second burn was undertaken.

In 2006 there was a large wildfire along the Stawell Street frontage.

Together, these fires have resulted in an overall increase in the reserve's floral biodiversity. The crew conduct detailed and regular quadrat surveying of plant species which provide data to support this.

If the reserve was not burnt, the ongoing decline of biodiversity would continue. In place of the diverse heathland, weeds take over such as Coast Tea-Tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) and Coast Wattle (*Acacia longifolia subsp. sophorae*), which made up a large proportion of the shrub and tree layer in the reserve prior to these burns.

The Tea Tree and Wattle were cut down and used as the primary source of fuel for the fire.

With strong support from the local community, the annual ecological burn is always a success. The resulting fire is extinguished that day, and after the autumn/winter rains, seedlings will germinate all over the burned area, attracting native fauna and local flora enthusiasts.

Sharing bat box knowledge

A number of members from Friends of Native Wildlife (FoNW) are participating in the Ivanhoe Bat Box Monitoring Project at the invitation of the leader of the project, Rob Bender.

Story by Elizabeth Walsh and Sally Eldridge
Friends of Native Wildlife Inc.

Photos by Daniel Burrowes
Friends of Native Wildlife Inc.

Gould's Wattled Bay *(Chalinobus gouldi).*

Rob started the Ivanhoe Bat Box Monitoring project nearly 20 years ago in parkland adjoining the Yarra River. He has been monitoring bat boxes monthly ever since.

Recently, FoNW took part in an inspection of 27 bat boxes located in trees up to six metres high.

Researcher Danielle led the inspection, donning safety belt equipment to attach to the ladder. Leaving the occasional spider in the boxes while extricating the bats, Danielle placed the microbats in cloth bags with a number identifying the box they came from.

Under the lid of each box was a device, which monitors temperature and humidity.

More research is underway to gauge how positioning of the boxes may be critical during the changing seasons and whether temperature and humidity are factors.

Once all the boxes had been inspected, the 37 bats collected were taken in their bags to a nearby location for them to be identified, weighed, measured, examined and recorded.

All of the bats collected this month were of the same species, Gould's Wattled Bat (*Chalinolobus gouldii*).

Mite samples imbedded in the wing membranes, as well as DNA samples, were taken for research from a few bats.

Once the bats were inspected and recorded, they were replaced in a fresh cotton bag and released after dark in the vicinity of the boxes they had been found roosting in.

FoNW will arrange another visit to Ivanhoe in spring if there is more interest shown by members or interested residents.

Monitoring bat boxes is important to check they stay in good condition, do not restrict the tree they are installed in and to find out when bats might occupy them. Other Melbourne studies suggest that it can take some time before bats will occupy boxes. Microbats are often found in Beaumaris and a number of locals have enjoyed watching the small bats flying out at dusk.

FoNW microbat evenings in Bayside will resume in spring. Visit the FoNW Facebook page for more information.

BAT BOX UPDATE

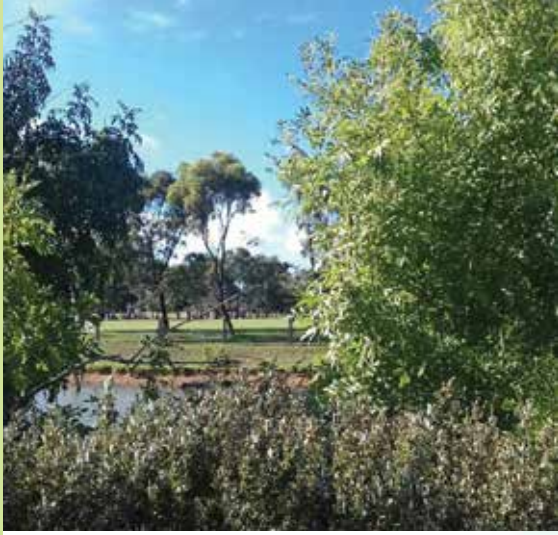
By Elizabeth Walsh
Co-Convenor

Rob Bender has joined FoNW to help finish some microbat boxes for Council to install in local parks and heathlands. Rob has introduced his artistic talent by including a flying bat stencil painted on one box and each one has its own painted bat above the entrance.

Regular monitoring and local contacts recently discovered a group of microbats in an outdoor umbrella in Sandringham that had been folded during the cooler months. This occurred soon after two large neighbouring blocks were cleared of all vegetation. Regular nightly foraging previously recorded on echolocation equipment in a nearby small bushy park and a long tree lined park had ceased, probably due to clearing the block.

Thank you to all the households who have placed bat boxes on their properties. It is a pleasure to catch up with many on our monitoring expedition.

Weed removal on Elsternwick Park Lake Island



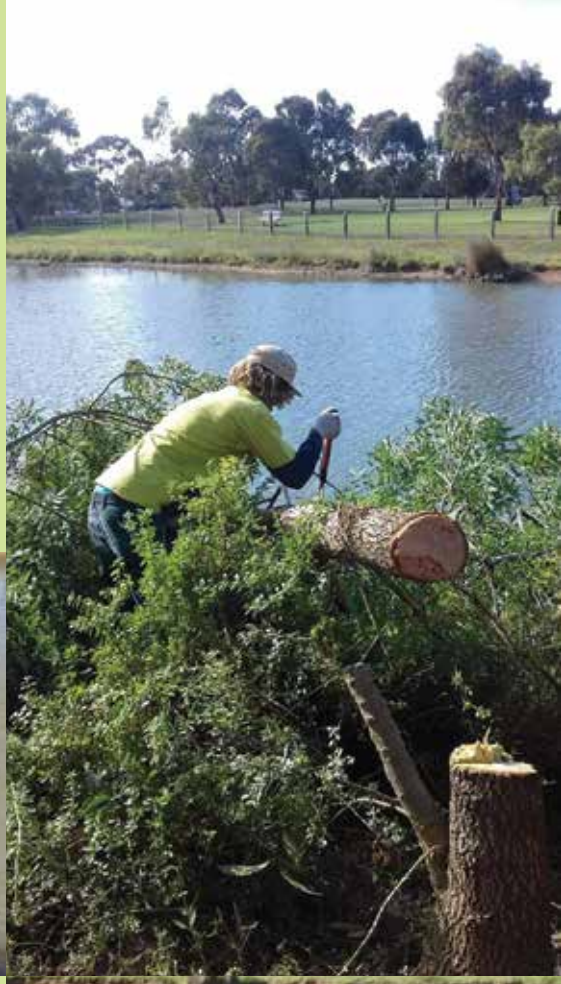
By Noni Dowling
Citywide Parks and Gardens apprentice

Over summer, members of the Bush and Infrastructure crews at Citywide went on an adventure at Elsternwick Park.

The task was to remove woody weeds from the island in the middle of the lake at the park.

To access the island, a dinghy with an outboard motor was used with Citywide Infrastructure team member Bryan Duggan ferrying Abel Dickinson from the Bush team and myself across the water.

The main weed on the island targeted was European Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). This is a deciduous tree that is quite common around Melbourne and is often found in gardens and as street trees.



Ashes have the ability to become weedy as they self-seed and are very fast growing. Due to this behaviour, they can rapidly colonise new areas[1]. This was in danger of happening on the island.

To eradicate the Ash saplings from the island, we manually removed the smaller weeds and roots.

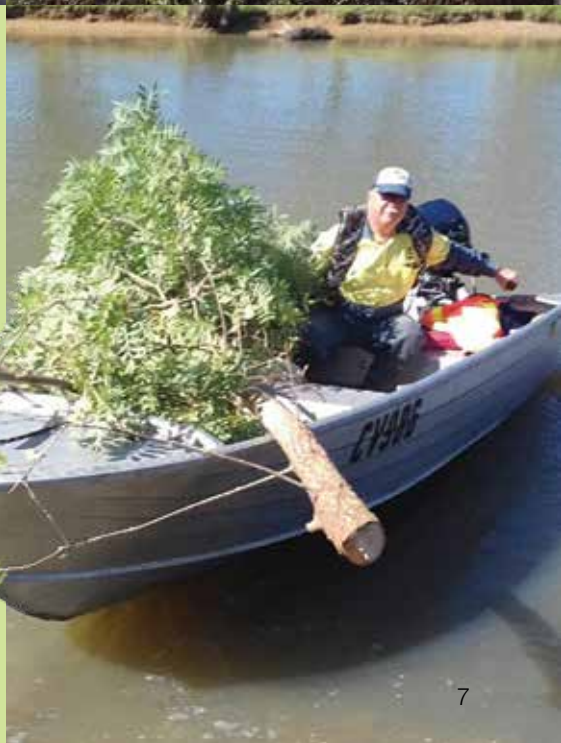
Those that had grown too big for hand removal were treated by the cut and paste method which involves sawing the sapling close to the base and dabbing glyphophate into the freshly cut surface. This poison then moves down through the remainder of the stump and through the roots, killing the tree and stopping it reshooting.

Other weeds removed include Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*). This is another fairly popular garden plant in Melbourne known for its fragrant and early spring flowers. While it is an Australian native, it belongs in a wet habitat such as rainforest and not in the coastal and heath areas of Bayside.

Sweet Pittosporum also quickly becomes weedy as birds devour the orange fruit and then deposit the digested seeds in their travels[2]. In this way, this species can spread far and wide.

The specimens found on the island were quite small and could easily be removed by hand. As these weeds were systematically extracted, they were stacked on the edge of the island for collection and taken to shore.

This took quite a number of trips but all major woody weeds were successfully removed from the island.



References

1. Atlas of Living Australia www.ie.ala.org.au
2. www.cwad.org.au

Can you spot a Musk Lorikeet?

By Lewis Hiller
Friends of Native Wildlife Inc

The Musk Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta concinna*) is thought to be named for the musky aroma it emits.

Smaller than the better-known, and more gaudily-coloured, Rainbow Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*), its emerald green attire fits in readily with the foliage of the trees on which it is dependent. This can make the birds quite difficult to spot.

Once learnt, the distinctive jingling call of the species allows for its ready detection in the area, even when the birds are out of sight in the tree canopy. In the late evening, flocks of Musk Lorikeets may be seen traversing the sky in Bayside as they head towards roosting trees; the flight is rapid and at close range a whirring of the wings may be heard (Morcombe 2004).

On occasion, Musk Lorikeets allow a remarkably close approach for the fortunate observer when preoccupied with feeding on low-hanging blooms (*Reader's Digest* 1982).

Musk Lorikeets commonly associate with other nectar-feeding parrots in flowering trees, especially eucalypts (Flegg 2002). Juvenile birds can be distinguished by a darker bill (Pizzey & Knight 2012).

The Musk Lorikeet may be confused with the Little Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta pusilla*), which is rarer in Bayside. The Little Lorikeet is a smaller bird with a higher-pitched call and lacks any red behind the eye.

Small populations of Scaly-breasted Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus*) are also present in Bayside, particularly around Beaumaris. These birds have a yellow 'scaly' pattern on the chest, red underwings and lack any red on the face.

The endangered Swift Parrot (*Lathameus discolor*) is readily distinguished by its long red tail and, again, by the absence of the characteristic red cheeks of the Musk Lorikeet (Morcome 2004). Additionally, the Musk Lorikeet may occasionally hybridise with other lorikeet species (Peter Fuller).

Musk Lorikeets are broadly distributed across eastern and south-eastern Australia and eastern Tasmania (Slater et al. 2009), being particularly associated with woodland environments comprised of various eucalypts.

These birds are considered a nomadic species (Morcome 2004), however where suitable habitats exist in leafy areas of Melbourne's south eastern suburbs, they may be reasonably sedentary (Fitzsimons et al. 2003).

The species has also been introduced to Western Australia from aviary

escapees or liberations (Pizzey & Knight 2012). This lorikeet has adapted quite well to well-treed suburban parks and streetscapes where eucalypts and other native trees have been planted.

A study found the majority of food trees used by Musk Lorikeets in Melbourne were non-indigenous eucalypts (Smith & Lill 2008). They are particularly fond of the Western Australian flowering gums (*Corymbia ficifolia*) (Fitzsimons et al. 2003).

In recent decades there has been a pronounced population increase of Rainbow and Musk Lorikeets in Melbourne suburbs, likely linked with the eucalypts planted in previous decades that are reaching maturity. According to early records, the Musk Lorikeet was originally only an uncommon winter visitor to the Melbourne region (Smith & Lill 2008).

In addition to nectar, the pollen from eucalypts has also been found to be a food source for lorikeets (Gartrell & Jones 2001), though over 95 per cent of the diet of the Musk Lorikeet is nectar (Smith & Lill 2008).

The Musk Lorikeet has proven surprisingly opportunistic, feeding on backyard apple and apricot trees when ripe fruit is left unprotected (Pizzey & Knight 2012). Invertebrates are also occasionally consumed (Shepherd 1994), as are galls found on *Acacia* spp. (Smith & Lill 2008). Seed only comprises a very small percentage of the diet (Shepherd 1994).

The Musk Lorikeet nests in tree hollows, generally of eucalypts, and usually has only two eggs per clutch (Pizzey & Knight 2012), however multiple broods may be raised in good seasons.

Hollows in living trees are generally preferred for nesting purposes by this species (Courtney & Debus 2006).

A highly social bird, it is quite unusual to record a single individual; they are more commonly encountered in flocks of half a dozen to several hundred (Morcome 2004).

The Musk Lorikeet is regarded as being of 'Least Concern' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and is regarded as 'locally common' by some Australian authorities (Pizzey & Knight 2012). However, as with many parrot species, loss of mature hollow-bearing trees may reduce nesting site availability and has been identified as a threat to lorikeet populations (Courtney & Debus 2006), and woodland clearing activities have been correlated with localised declines of this bird in South Australia (Szabo et al. 2011).

Studies have also indicated the Musk Lorikeet is relatively less frequently encountered in new Melbourne suburbs, where exotic vegetation predominates, than the Rainbow Lorikeet (Fitzsimons et al. 2003).

Some studies suggest that lorikeets, including Musk, are relatively less susceptible to the aggressive domineering behaviour of the Noisy Miner (*Manorina melanocephala*) than most other small birds (Daniels & Kirkpatrick 2006).

Unfortunately, Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease, an endemic disease of parrots, has been found in the Musk Lorikeet (Fogell, Martin & Groombridge 2016).

Nursery Open Season

The Bayside Community Nursery kicked off the 2017 sales season on a mild Saturday morning, coinciding with the first day of school holidays on 1 April.

Eager customers poured through the Nursery gates at 9am, as the annual 'Gala Day' commenced, keen to view the 2017 range of species.

Almost 2,000 plants were sold on opening morning with customers choosing a wide variety of indigenous groundcovers, lilies, trees and shrubs for their Bayside or nearby gardens.

Since the redevelopment of the Community Nursery in 2016, the purpose-built facility has gone from strength to strength, showcased through the fantastic quality of stock and widening range of species available for purchase in retail.

Thank you to all the Bayside Community Nursery volunteers, both those who help propagate stock, plus those who run the retail sales area and help many visitors to leave satisfied, informed and inspired.

Get more information, tips and advice about keeping your garden plants thriving by joining a Friends of Bayside working bee. Visit baysidevolunteering.com.au and search 'Friends'.

Our Gardens: Our Refuge

Exhibition of Photographs of the Private Gardens of Bayside

Story and Photos by Pauline Reynolds

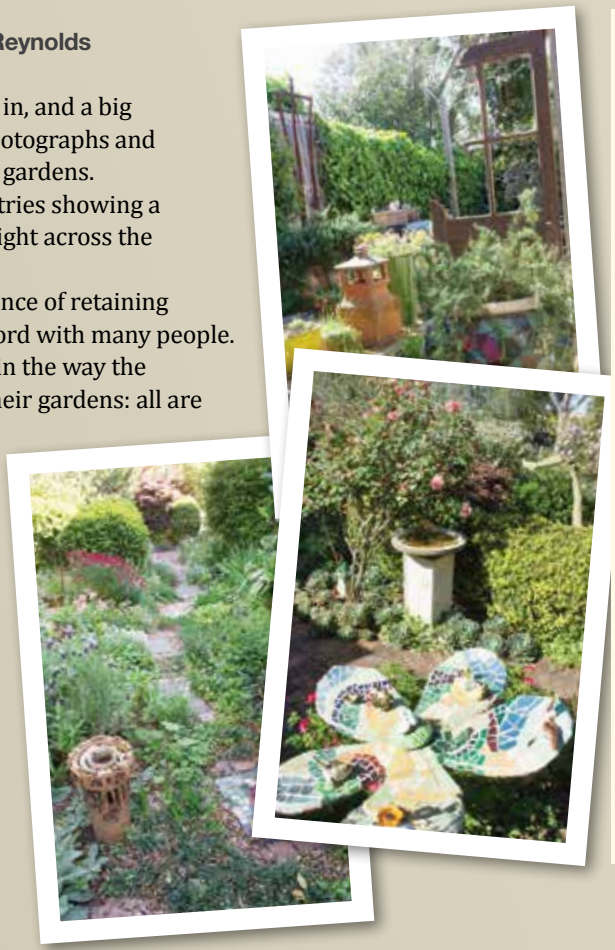
There has been great interest in, and a big response to, our request for photographs and stories about Bayside's private gardens.

We have now received 58 entries showing a wonderful variety of gardens right across the municipality.

The idea around the importance of retaining private open space struck a chord with many people.

The images are quite varied in the way the gardeners chose to illustrate their gardens: all are really lovely. Everyone has put a lot of thought into how they wanted to show their spaces and tell their stories.

We are so appreciative of the work the gardeners have done to make the exhibition quite special. It clearly highlights people's concern about the disappearance of private open space with its greenness, habitat and space. Gardens are certainly refuges for us all in so many ways.



Visit the exhibit

Bayside City Council Corporate Centre (the Atrium)
12 July–9 August

Beaumaris Library
16 August–13 September

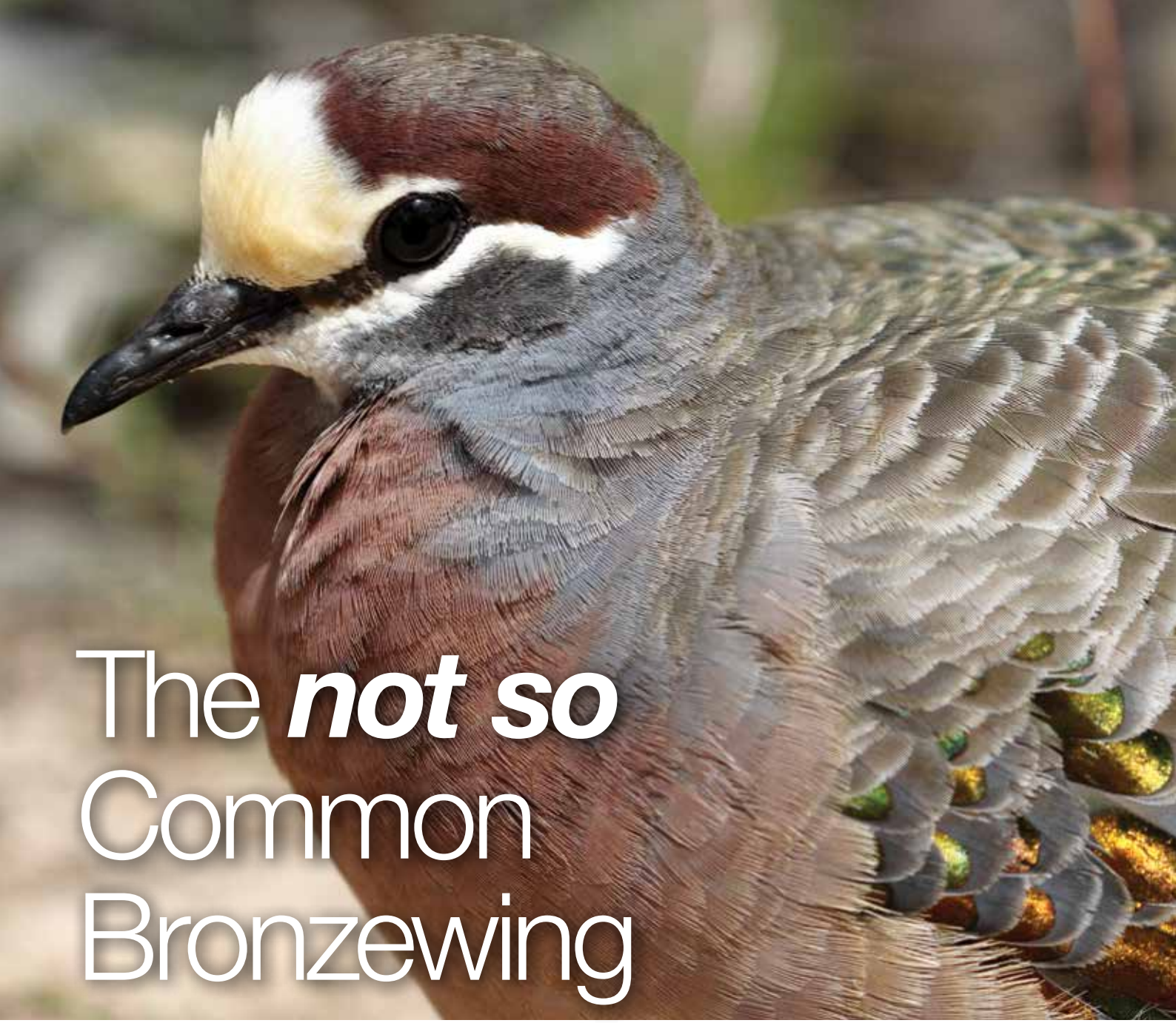
Brighton Library
20 September–18 October

Sandringham and Hampton libraries (shared)
25 October–22 November

Gardening information sessions

Sustaining Your Wellbeing in Your Garden
Venue: Beaumaris Library
Date: 23 August
Time: 6.30-7.30pm

Q&A: Meet the Gardeners and Share Your own Experiences
Venue: Brighton Library
Date: 26 August
Time: 6.30-7.30pm



The *not so* Common Bronzewing

By Lewis Hiller
Friends of Native Wildlife Inc.

The Bronzewing Pigeon (*Phaps chalcoptera*) is a resident of a variety of wooded habitats throughout Australia.

Its official name, Common Bronzewing, suggests the species can be locally abundant where suitable habitat has been retained (Slater p. 210).

Unfortunately in Bayside, and neighbouring municipalities, the species cannot be broadly considered as 'common' due to ongoing suburban development reducing suitable habitat into vulnerable fragments.

To overcome this problem, the Friends of Native Wildlife Inc. has been committed to reversing the decline of the Bronzewing Pigeon by restoring habitat including planting indigenous food plants and shelter species. Ecologists believe these birds can adapt to suburban environs if that habitat is ideal (Conole 2014).

This Bronzewing Pigeon can be locally nomadic (Pizzey p. 50) and numbers in an area can fluctuate, making monitoring populations potentially difficult. In addition, this pigeon can be quite inconspicuous as it tends to stick to cover and is generally shy, making it difficult to detect and then approach. Often, the first sign an observer has of their presence is a loud clatter of wings emanating from low vegetation as the bird makes for the horizon after being disturbed (Flegg p. 170).

The Bronzewing Pigeon is a medium-sized dove, recognisable by iridescent plumage on its wings, which varies in colour from green to bronze with lighting and aspect.

Males possess a buff yellow forehead, which is a plain grey on the female (Morcombe p. 177).

The Bronzewing Pigeon may also be detected by its call, described as an 'oom' (Flegg), which may not even be recognised as a birdcall at first by the uninitiated.

This is a predominately ground-dwelling species (Miller, Blaszczynski & Weston) that can possibly be confused with a few other species of doves or pigeons in the region.

The Brush Bronzewing (*Phaps elegans*) is a smaller more chestnut-coloured species only rarely recorded as a vagrant to the general area. For example, sightings recorded at Long Hollow Heathland in Beaumaris, Elster Creek in Elsternwick and a bit further afield at Karkarook Park in Heatherton (Norris).

Reporting Bronzewing sightings

A small population of Bronzewing pigeons appear to have held on after some of their favourite introduced food trees were cleared in the industrial estates of Sandringham, where up to seven have been seen at one time. For a decade, volunteers have helped plant out a small section of land at the south-west corner of the Sandringham Golf Driving Range to help support the population where one or two are still seen regularly. Friends of Native Wildlife (FoNW) members have seen single and pairs of Bronzewings over the years at Cheltenham Park, Long Hollow and George Street Heathland. However, it has been some time since there has been a sighting at the golf courses. FoNW encourages volunteers to become aware of sightings to help build up a better idea of whether the population is increasing or stable and at what numbers.

To learn more about the Bronzewing, and the various introduced and native pigeon species or to report any local sightings, please visit www.bayfonw.org.au/sighting-report

The Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) is an open country bird, which is common in Bayside. It is also related to bronzewings and is particularly widespread on open fields (habitats generally avoided by bronzewings). It also has iridescence on the wings which has resulted in some cases of misidentification.

The Crested Pigeon was first recorded in the Bayside region in the mid-1990s (Norris), however, as the name suggests, it may be differentiated by a narrow crest of feathers on top of the head absent in the Common Bronzewing. The Crested Pigeon was originally only found in the interior of Australia (Black p. 45). Several introduced doves also occur in the area, such as the feral Rock Dove and Spotted Dove, however these lack iridescence on the wings and are more common in urban situations.

The Bronzewing feeds mostly on seeds of native vegetation, such as those of grasses, wattles and other members of the pea family (Pizzey p. 50). It has also adapted to a few exotic food sources where available, such as wheat, exotic grasses and an introduced legume known as Tree Lucerne (*Chamaecytisus palmensis*).

They are most often encountered in areas close to water (Pizzey). For cover they prefer the likes of Tea-trees, Banksias and Wattles. For nesting purposes, bronzewings tend to favour reasonably low forks of tree branches in dense cover (Pizzey), and like most members of the dove family tend to have clutches comprising just two eggs. The nest itself is a flimsy platform of twigs.

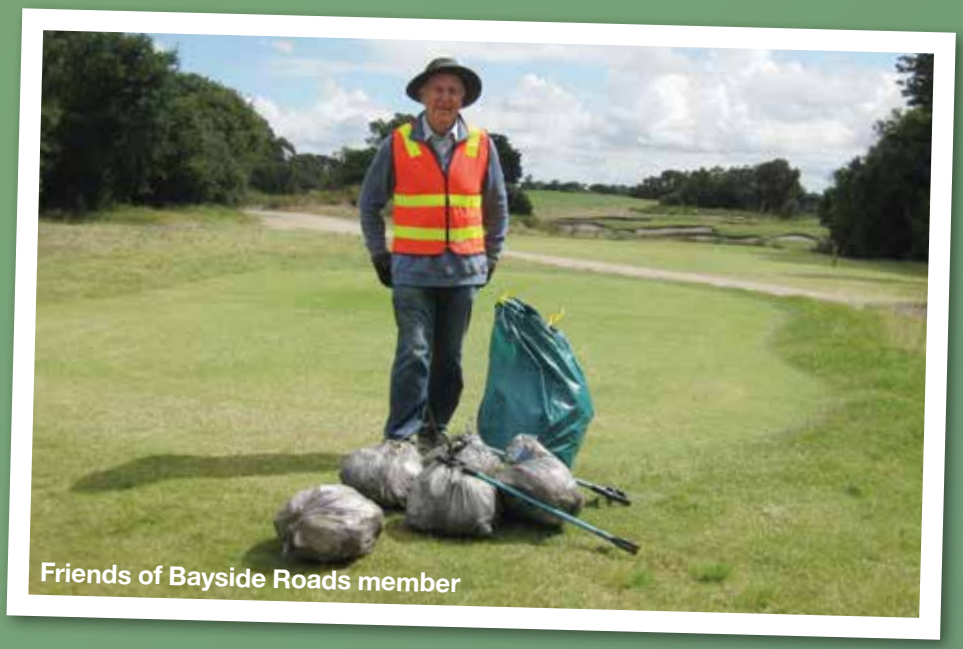
In terms of conservation and threats, the species is regarded as of 'Least Concern' nationally by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 2016. Closer to home the bronzewing is uncommon. Threats include foxes, cats, dogs and most significantly people, particularly their tendencies to remove its habitat to make way for housing and manicured gardens, and to drive cars. Interestingly, in Western Australia, the birds are reported to feed on some poisonous native pea plants, rendering their flesh toxic to predators (Peacock, Christensen & Williams 2011). The birds are also attacked by various species of lice (Price, Clayton & Adams 2000).

Reference List

- Slater, Peter, Slater, Pat & Slater, Raoul. *The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds second edition*. Reed New Holland, Sydney, 2009.
- Black, Andrew. 'Range Expansion of the Crested Pigeon, *Ocyphaps lophotes*, in South Australia', *South Australian Ornithologist* vol. 40, no. 2, 2015, http://www.birdssa.asn.au/images/saopdfs/Volume40/2015V40P045.pdf
- Price, Roger D, Clayton, Dale H & Adams, Richard D. 'Pigeon Lice Down Under: Taxonomy of Australian Campanulotes (Phthiraptera: Philopteridae), with a Description of C. durdeni N. Sp. *Journal of Parasitology*, vol. 86, no. 5, pp. 948-950, http://www.bioone.org/doi/abs/10.1645/0022-3395(2000)086%5B0948:PLDUTO%5D2.0.CO%3B2
- Peacock, David, Christensen, Per & Williams, Brian. 'Historical accounts of toxicity to introduced carnivores consuming bronzewing pigeons (*Phaps chalcoptera* and *Phaps elegans*)', Australian Zoologist, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 826-842, 2011, http://publications.rzsnsw.org.au/doi/abs/10.7882/AZ.2011.034?code=rzsw-site
- Pizzey, Graham & Knight, Frank. *The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia ninth edition*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2012.
- Conole, Lawrence E. 'Degree of Adaptive Response in Urban Tolerant Birds Shows Influence of Habitat-of-Origin'. *PeerJ Journal*, vol. 2, no. 306, 2014, https://peerj.com/articles/306/
- Miller, Kelly K, Blaszcynski, Veronika K & Weston, Michael A. 'Feeding Wild Birds in Backyards: A Test of Water Versus Food'. *Ecological Management & Restoration*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 156-158, 2015. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/emr.12157/full
- Morcombe, Michael. *Field Guide to Australian Birds complete compact edition*, Pascal Press, 2004.
- Flegg, Jim. *Photographic Field Guide Birds of Australia second edition*, Reed New Holland, 2002.
- Norris, Michael. *Bayside Pigeons*, Bayside Friends of Native Wildlife supported by Melbourne Water, 2008.
- The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, *Phaps chalcoptera*, 2016, http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22690667/0

New Friends tackle roadside litter

By Derek Jones
Convenor of Friends of Bayside Roads


Friends of Bayside Roads member

My wife Lizzie and I moved from the Macedon Ranges a few years ago, to live in Bluff Road, Black Rock.

On our morning walks between the golf courses along Cheltenham Road, we were disappointed to see so much litter and even hard rubbish on the side of the road. We were aware of this sort of problem in the country, where we took responsibility for a 10-kilometre stretch of road making sure it was clear of rubbish.

While we did not expect to see the same problem along nature strips in the suburbs, it was quite common for us to pick up litter as we went for a walk.

However, the quantity of litter and rubbish surprised us so much that we contacted the General Manager of the Royal Melbourne Golf Club Warwick Hill-Rennie to assist with disposing the rubbish. Warwick was quick to help and placed bins in strategic places for us to use. But, I believed more could be done.

After visiting Council's website, I contacted Council's Friends of Bayside Support Officer Jill Robinson to establish if a Roadside Litter Patrol concept could be built into Council's existing volunteer activities. Jill embraced the idea and saw the potential to incorporate roadside litter into a Friends of Bayside volunteer program.

To start, I surveyed 15 roadside areas covering about 40 kilometres adjacent to Royal Melbourne, Sandringham Golf Links, Cheltenham Golf Club and Victoria Golf Club.

This also included a number of parks and gardens including Beaumaris Reserve, Donald MacDonald Reserve, Long Hollow Heathland, Tricks Reserve, George Street Reserve and Tjilatjirrin Reserve.

Jill proposed a pilot of six patrol routes for the program covering the roads adjacent to parks and golf courses in the area immediately surrounding Royal Melbourne Golf Club and the Sandringham Golf Links.

On discussing the pilot program with Warwick, he suggested that the Club's Neighbourhood Players Group (NPG) could be invited to participate. This group comprises of 70 local residents, whose properties adjoin, or are close to the Royal Melbourne Golf Club and who are very active and enthusiastic about keeping its surrounds litter and vandalism free.

The President of the group, Alan Gaskell, who already had his own litter collection route, readily agreed and got the NPG involved seeking out volunteers.

The Bayside Roads Litter Patrol pilot program was officially launched on 1 February at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club.

Bayside Mayor Alex del Porto attended, along with Council's Parks Management Officer Damian Carr, former Open Space Coordinator Simon Finlay and Jill Robinson. Captain David Thomas, President Brian McPhail and General Manager Warwick Hill-Rennie from the Royal Melbourne Golf Club also attended, along with the NPG volunteers who were given information and some special litter-handling kits including bio-degradable bags and litter 'pickers' to help with the collection.

Now, Lizzie and I along with six NPG volunteers – Alan Gaskell, Alan Cope, Geoff Thomas, Andrew Petley, David Temple and Alan Thomas – are covering the six pilot patrol routes and a further 10 volunteers have agreed to patrol smaller sections of roads at the boundaries of the two golf courses.

The volunteers pick up litter on their routes once or twice a week and notify the Council of any major rubbish dumps they find, which are all too frequent.

Together, we share an ambition to cover the roadside reserves along all the parks, gardens, golf courses, community centres and sportsgrounds across Bayside within the next 12 months.

Autumn sunset at George Street Reserve

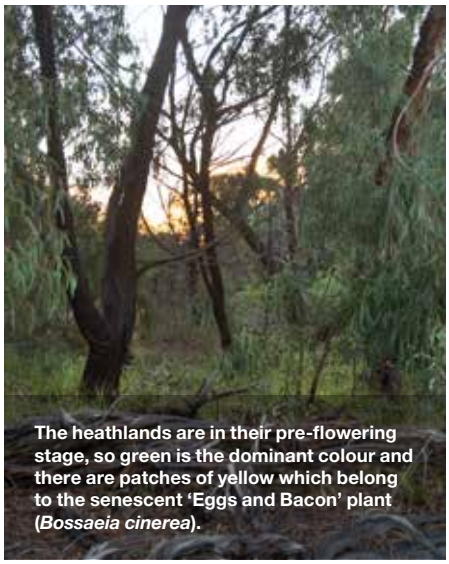
Story by Dr Valerie Tarrant
Photos by Pauline Reynolds
Friends of George Street Reserve
Co-Convenors

Looking into the reserve from the George Street boundary on an early April evening, I watched the light change in the west from grey-blue with a touch of gold, to grey and gold, and then to orange. Finally, darkness fell.

The distinctive voice of cicadas mingled with an occasional bird call. Sounds of many passing cars reminded me that our bushland is a rare treasure in the midst of a suburban landscape.

To the south, old Tea Tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) branches, their shapes reminiscent of curving sculptures, are spread over the ground. To the north are flourishing eucalypts. Long sprays of Clematis (*Clematis aristata*) clothe the old fence and Correas (*Correa reflexa*) are showing their red and pale greenish bells.

The nearby sandy track running inside George Street Reserve is soft to walk on. It is home to a tribe of tiny black ants, which are interesting to watch. They went in a line across the track and then disappeared into the undergrowth. I was reminded of the story of the famous Dr Albert Schweitzer who moved out of a room in a house in Africa because he did not want to disturb the ants who had settled there.



The heathlands are in their pre-flowering stage, so green is the dominant colour and there are patches of yellow which belong to the senescent 'Eggs and Bacon' plant (*Bossaeia cinerea*).

Charles Darwin, well known for his travels and writings, including *The Origin Of Species*, was a keen observer of the natural world. He wrote:

'It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank clothed with plants of many kinds, with birds singing in the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms ... have all been produced by laws acting around us ... Growth with Reproduction.' (Robert Ingpen, *Australia's Heritage Watch: An Overview Of Australian Conservation*, Rigby, Melbourne 1981, p. 32.)

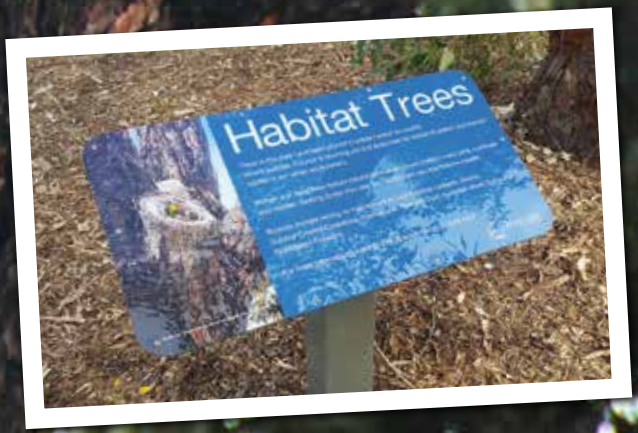
The phrase 'Growth with Reproduction' is a useful reminder of the ways in which reproduction works in our reserve, through fire and wind-blown seed. Friends continue their own efforts to care for the vegetation through weeding out unwanted species, monitoring ripe seed and assisting in propagation activities at the Bayside Community Nursery, which continues to flourish.

Seed Collecting

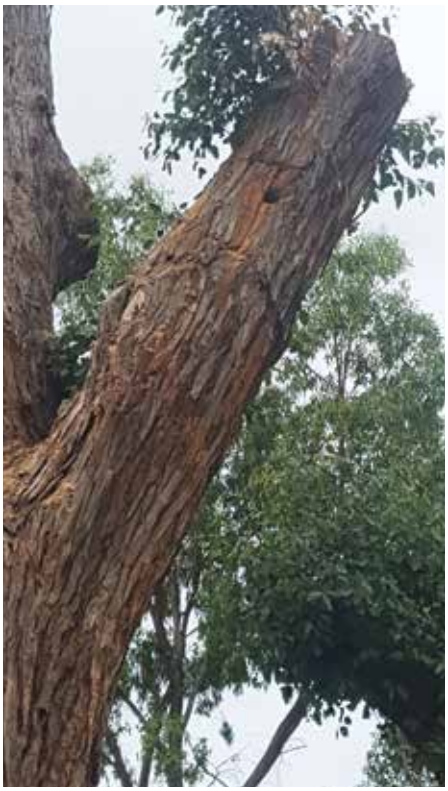
To collect indigenous plant seeds you must have a Seed Collection Permit issued by the State Government.
You can collect seeds with any member of the Citywide Bushland & Nursery Crew, who are covered by a permit.
The permit ensures only seed required by the Bayside Community Nursery is collected. It also helps the nursery know where, when and by whom the seed was collected, which is crucial to the integrity of the stock.
For more information contact Citywide Bushland & Nursery Supervisor Jo Hurse on **9283 2050** or **Jo.Hurse@citywide.com.au**

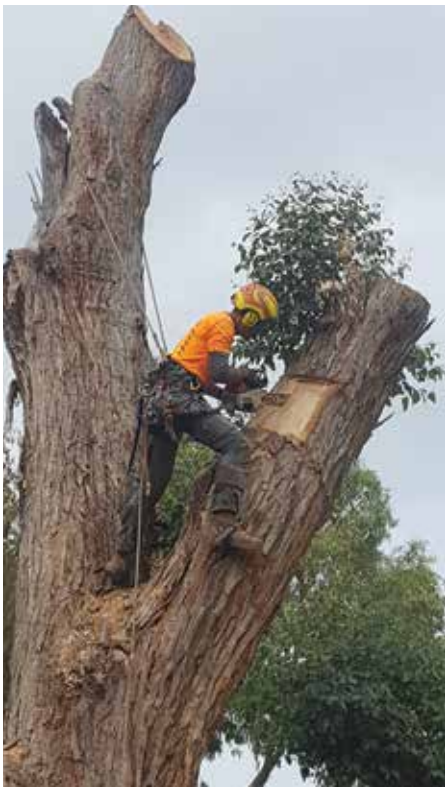
Habitat hollows

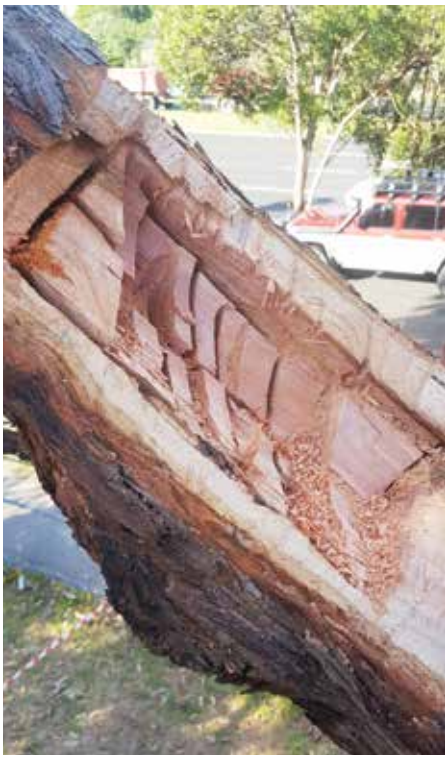
Trees are habitat for wildlife such as Sugar Gliders, possums and many bird species like Lorikeets, Kookaburras and Rosellas, which use tree hollows for nesting and breeding.



By Grant Harris
Ironbark Environnmental Arboricullture





Hollows are often found in dead and declining trees, which presents the challenge of balancing risk management with retention of wildlife habitat.

Ecological research has identified the removal of large, old trees from green spaces as a key threat to the diversity and viability of urban wildlife.

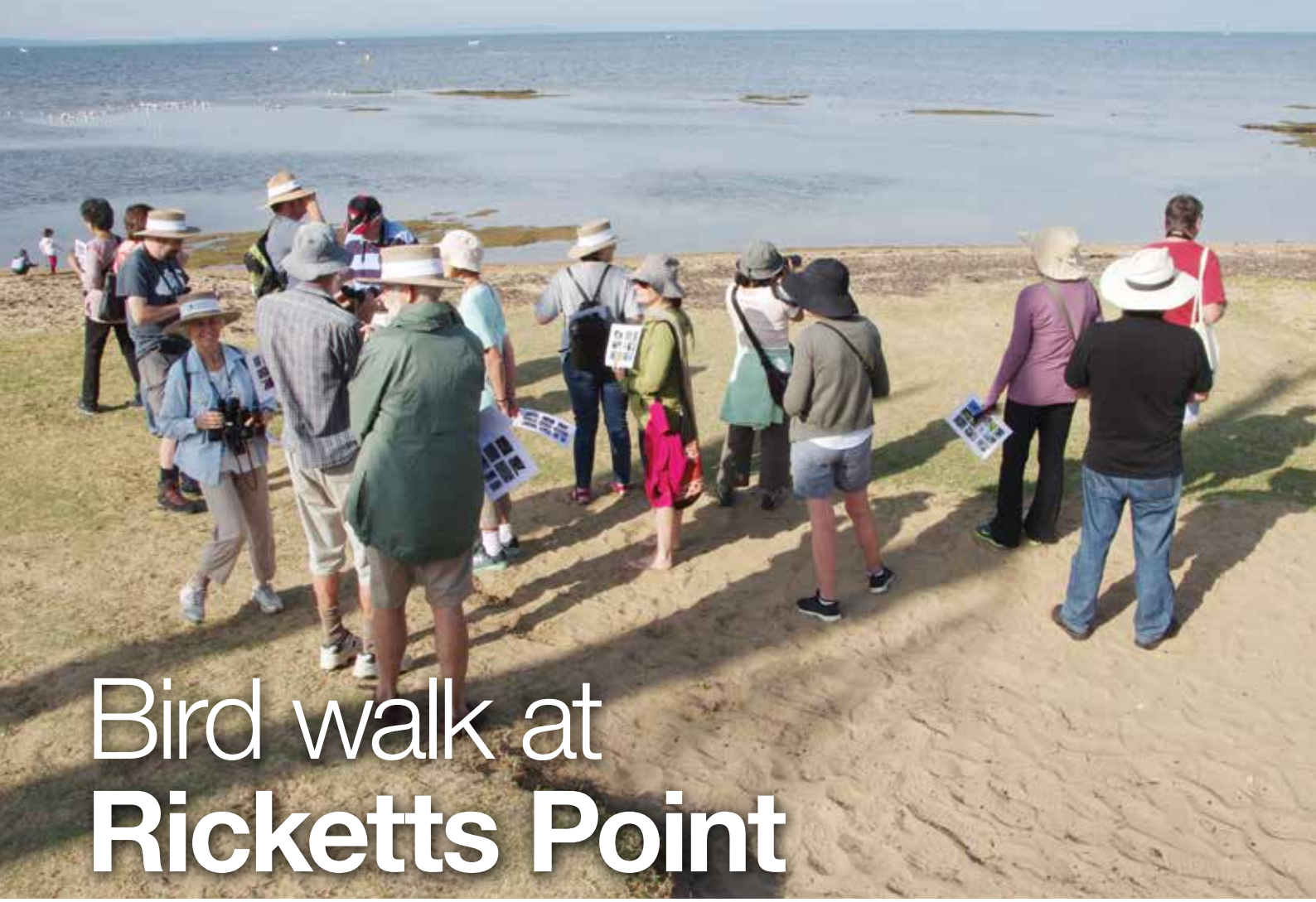
Bayside City Council is working with environmental arboriculturalists, using a new technique to create artificial tree hollows.

Chainsaws are used to carve hollows in the trunks of trees which have had their branches removed for safety reasons. The ends of the branches are pruned to mimic natural breakages, which provides habitat for invertebrates.

Artificial tree hollows have successfully been used in Wyperfeld National Park in Victoria, to create habitat hollows for the threatened Major Mitchell's Cockatoo (*Lophochroa leadbeateri leadbeateri*), and on Bruny Island, Tasmania, for the critically engaged Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*).

In Bayside, Rainbow Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*) have occupied purposeful artificial hollows carved into trees in Hurlingham Park.

This new technique will ensure Bayside residents are able to enjoy the benefits of green spaces, with a high faunal diversity.



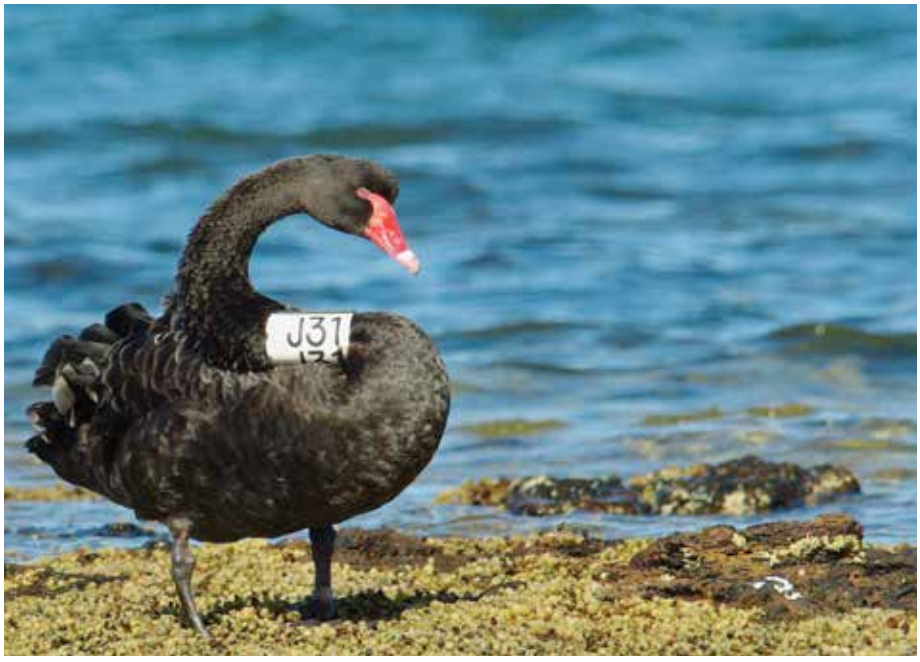
Bird walk at **Ricketts Point**

Story and photos by Denis Young
Friends of Native Wildlife Inc

A beautiful sea breeze, sun filtering through light cloud and low tide greeted 18 keen bird watchers ready to take part in another Ricketts Point bird walk organised by the Bayside Friends of Native Wildlife Inc (FoNW).

Starting at the Beaumaris Yacht Club car park, the group divided, with one following the shoreline making their way south. The second party strolled in the same direction through the banksias and along inland bush paths.

Meeting at the Beaumaris Lifesaving Club almost an hour later, the groups exchanged bird sightings and shared observation tips before completing the circuit return walk.



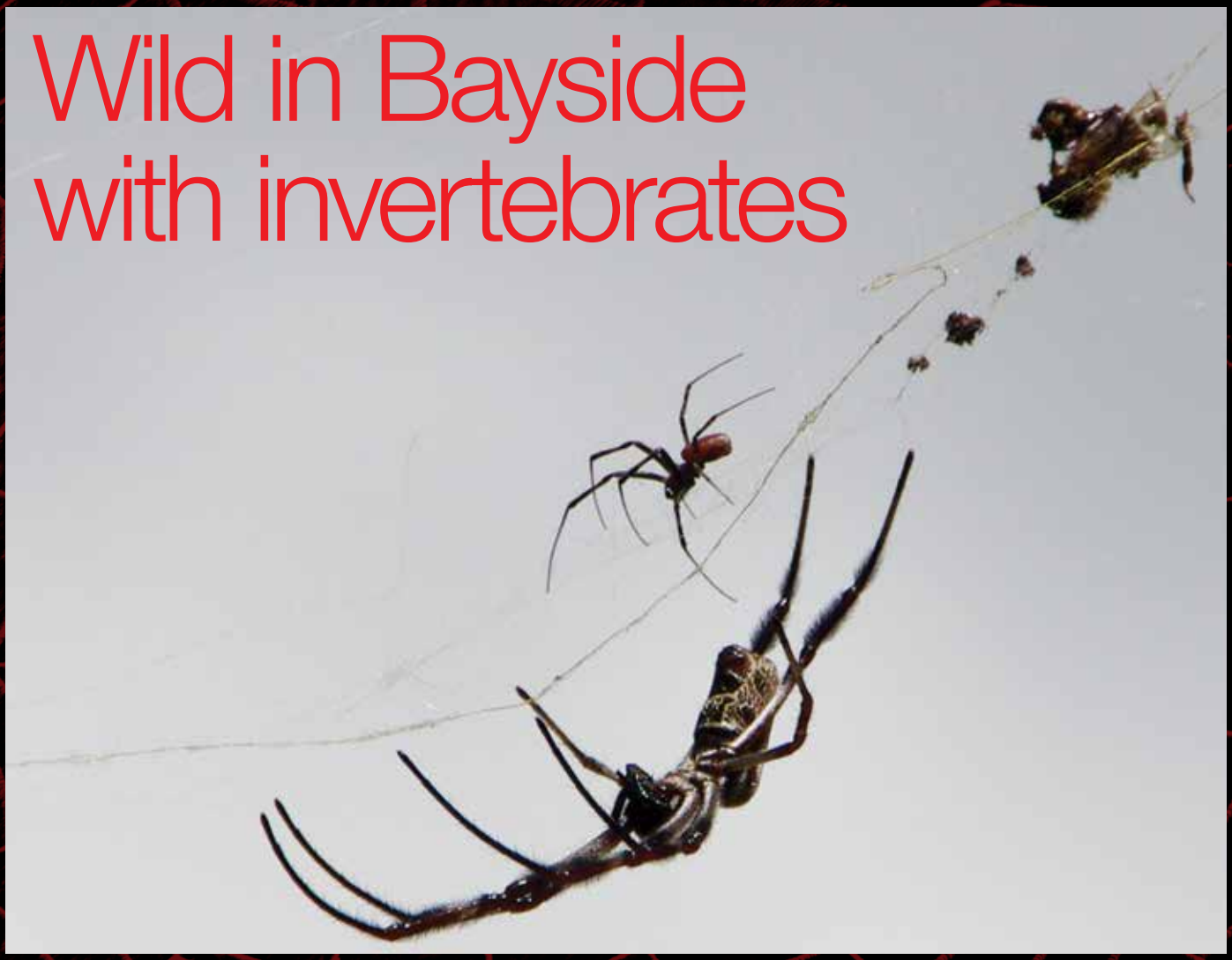
Swapping notes after the activity, a total of 27 different birds were confirmed from the combined walks. While only accounting for seven identifications, the largest numbers were water birds, with Silver Gulls being the most common. Many Crested Terns were scattered among the gulls and there were quite a few Little Pied Cormorants indicating fish activity around the adjacent reefs.

Among the land birds were at least two families of Superb Blue Wrens, now firmly entrenched in this locality, and Scrub Wrens. A flock of Galahs flew over and Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos were heard.

Discovering a tagged Black Swan (number 31) and her mate was a highlight. The sighting was reported on the My Swan website www.myswan.org.au where other sightings of her are logged since she was collared in 2013.

At least one more walk at the same location is planned this year as species and numbers fluctuate with the seasons. Bayside is fortunate to have such a unique setting where a mix of land and water birds can be observed so readily.

Wild in Bayside with invertebrates



Story and photos by Denis Young
Friends of Native Wildlife Inc

Bayside's local world of insects came alive to an audience of 40 people at a recent Friends of Native Wildlife Inc. (FoNW) 'Wild in Bayside' event.

A graphic narrative was delivered by President of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Max Campbell, accompanied by his amazing videos and images, and supported by the superb macro photography of local resident John Eichler.

Max is an outstanding ambassador for the natural ecology of Victoria. He explained there is no such thing as a stand-alone species and the variety of invertebrates is almost beyond comprehension.

There are so many new examples being discovered here in Victoria that even with John's knowledge, he was still unsure of some of the species featured in some images.

Through his engaging presentation we became endeared to spiders, scorpions, ants and many other invertebrates, some of which were familiar and others which were unusual.

With humorous anecdotes and straightforward explanations, Max shared facts and defused myths like how the interrelationships between them and soil (particularly the top 30cm), ground cover and fungi is central to invertebrates' existence, and their role as food for higher orders of the food chain such as birds.

Max touched on the environmental impact of introduced invaders such as European Wasps, Portuguese Millipedes and European Honey Bees, the latter taking nectar at the expense of Honeyeaters.

The biggest danger now and into the future for invertebrates in Bayside is human activity, where the impact on the environment through housing, farming and industrial development has a disastrous ecological 'flow on effect' beginning with soil disturbance.

Invertebrates' habitats and lifestyles can be supported by:

- Retaining leaf litter on the ground in yards
- Incorporating indigenous plants in gardens
- Never using synthetic turf
- Avoiding use of insecticides, particularly outdoors
- Maintaining and creating plenty of open space with soil and plants in residential developments
- Educating children to appreciate invertebrates and not fear them, even though some of them are better observed than handled.

Frog Watch in Bayside

Learn how to identify local frog calls at Bayside's regular Frog Watch, part of the health surveys of local frogs for Melbourne Water.

Dates:
Wednesday 14 June
Wednesday 12 July
Wednesday 9 August
Wednesday 13 September

Time:
7.30-9.30pm

Venue:
Tjilatijirrin Reserve
(park on street)
25 Tulip Street
Sandringham, VIC 3191

This event is free for Friends of Native Wildlife members. If you'd like to join, please see visit www.bayfonw.org.au/join

FoNW
BAYSIDE FRIENDS OF NATIVE WILDLIFE

Kids' Corner

Hey kids, how much do you know about these famous invertebrates … ANTS?

They may be small but what these insects lack in size, they make up in numbers! Ants are an important part of the world's ecological system, helping to aerate soil, keep the environment clean, and they provide a vital food source to other animals.

Check out these cool facts.

1

There are over 12,000 ant species worldwide

And when combined, there are about a quadrillion of them on the planet. That's 10,000,000,000,000,000 – just a few more than the 7 billion people on earth!

2

The Bullet Ant is said to have the most painful sting in the world!

Living in humid jungle conditions such as the Amazon, their sting has been compared to being hit by a bullet – ***ouch!***

The Bullet Ant looks as mean as its bite

3

Ants are among the longest living insects

Some can live for up to 30 years.

4

The ant is one of the world's strongest creatures in relation to its size

A single ant can carry 50 times its own bodyweight, and they'll even work together to move bigger objects as a group!

5

Ants hold the record for the fastest movement in the animal kingdom

The Trap Jaw ant can close its jaws at 140mph, which it uses to kill its prey or injure predators.

6

Ants can be found on every single continent except Antarctica

Which is ironic given its name … Antarctica.

Black Ant

7

Ants are social insects which live in colonies

An ant colony is made up of one or more egg-laying queens and a large amount of female worker ants who tend to her, build and maintain the nest, forage for food and care for the young. The males exist to just mate!

8

Ants don't have ears, and some of them don't have eyes!

They listen by feeling vibrations from the ground through their feet, and eye-less ants such as the driver ant species can communicate by using their antennae!

They also send chemical signals (called pheremones) released through their body to send messages to other ants, and send out warnings when danger is near by leaving trails of pheremones leading to food sources and even use them to attract a mate – a sort of ant love potion!

Red Bull Ant

9

The largest ant's nest ever found was over 5955km wide!

Found in Argentina in 2000, the ginormous colony housed 33 ant populations that had merged into one giant supercolony, with millions of nests and billions of workers!

Information about ants sourced from National Geographic Kids! Visit www.natgeokids.com for more interesting facts about plants, animals, science and history.

Volunteer Groups

Friends Groups

Friends of Balcombe Park
Convenor: Ian O'Loughlin
Mobile: 0412 432 618 **Email:** ianoloughlin@optusnet.com.au
Melway Ref: 86 C4
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 25 Jun, 30 Jul, Aug 27, Sep 24 **Time:** 10am-12pm

Friends of Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary
Convenor: Michael Norris
Phone: (03) 9521 6879 **Email:** menorris@ozemail.com.au
Melway Ref: 77 B11
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 10 Jun, 8 Jul, 12 Aug, 9 Sep **Time:** 10am-12pm

Bayside Environmental Friends Network
Convenor: Jill Robinson
Phone: 9583 8408 **Email:** friends@bayside.vic.gov.au

Friends of Brighton Dunes
Convenor: Jenny Talbot
Phone: (03) 9592 2109
Melway Ref: 76 C2
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: Every Tuesday **Time:** 8am-10am

Friends of Cheltenham Park
Convenor: Valerie Tyers
Phone: (03) 9588 0107 **Email:** valerietyers@hotmail.com
Melway Ref: 86 G1
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 4 Jun, 2 Jul, 6 Aug, 3 Sep **Time:** 10am-12pm

Friends of Donald MacDonald Reserve
Convenor: Kim Croker
Phone: (03) 9589 2443 **Email:** kcroker@bigpond.net.au
Melway Ref: 86 B6
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 7 Jun, 5 Jul, 2 Aug, 6 Sep **Time:** 10am-12pm

Friends of George Street Reserve
Convenors: Val Tarrant, Pauline Reynolds
Phone: (03) 9598 0554 **Email:** vtarrant@ozemail.com.au
Phone: (03) 9598 6368 **Email:** pauline.reynolds.au@gmail.com
Melway Ref: 86 B1
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 18 Jun, 16 Jul, 20 Aug, 17 Sep **Time:** 10am-12pm

Friends of Gramatan Avenue Heathland
Convenor: Ken Rendell
Phone: (03) 9589 4452
Melway Ref: 86 C6
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 4 Jun, 2 Jul, 6 Aug, 3 Sep **Time:** 1pm-3pm

Friends of Long Hollow Heathland
Convenor: Rob Saunders
Phone: (03) 9515 3383 **Email:** srednuas@hotmail.com
Melway Ref: 86 D5
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 25 Jun, 30 Jul, 27 Aug, 24 Sep **Time:** 1pm-3pm

Friends of Merindah Park & Urban Forest
Convenor: John de Cruz Douglas
Phone: 0417 386 408 **Email:** jdecdouglas@internode.on.net
Melway Ref: 77 B12
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 11 Jun, 9 Jul, 13 Aug, 10 Sep **Time:** 10am-12pm

Friends of Native Wildlife
Convenors: Anne Jessel, Elizabeth Walsh
Phone: (03) 9585 6788 **Phone:** (03) 9598 9009
Email: info@bayfonw.org.au

Friend of Picnic Point Sandringham
Convenor: Terry Reynolds
Phone: (03) 9598 2978 **Email:** reynolds_family@hotmail.com

Friends of Ricketts Point
Convenor: Ross Longden
Phone: (03) 9589 2725
Melway Ref: 86 D9
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 28 Jun, 26 Jul, 30 Aug, 27 Sep **Time:** 10am-12pm

Friends of Ricketts Point Landside
Convenor: Sue Raverty
Phone: (03) 9589 2103 **Email:** sraverty@westnet.com.au
Melway Ref: 86 C9
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 20 Jun, 18 Jul, 17 Aug, 27 Sep **Time:** 1pm-3pm

Friends of Table Rock
Convenor: Ken Rendell
Phone: (03) 9589 4452
Melway Ref: 86 E10
Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 27 Jun, 25 Jul, 29 Aug, 26 Sep **Time:** 10am-12pm

Friends of Elster Creek
Convenor: Gio Fitzpatrick
Phone: 0432 045 303 **Email:** gio@ecocentre.com
Meeting point: Elwood Canal, Glen Huntly Road Bridge
Upcoming Event:
www.facebook.com/friendsofelstercreek/events

Don't miss out on seeing this and more beautiful photographs of local backyard gardens at venues across Bayside. See page 11 for more details.

Environment Groups

Friends of Bayside Roads

Contact: Derek Jones
Phone: 0417 360 747 **Email:** derekhjones@gmail.com

Bayside Bushwalking Club (Charman to Cromer Roads, Beaumaris)

Contact: Jo Hurse
Phone: (Citywide Park Care) 9283 2052

Beaumaris Conservation Society

President: Greg Mier
Contact: PO Box 7016, Beaumaris 3193 **Email:** info@bcs.asn.au

Black Rock and Sandringham Conservation Association

Convenor: John Neve
Phone: 0479 196 260 **Email:** jneve@ozemail.com.au

Upcoming working bees:
Dates: 6 & 20 Jun, 4 & 18 Jul, 1 & 15 Aug, 5 & 19 Sep
Time: 10am-12pm

Marine Care Ricketts Point Inc

Website: www.marinecare.org.au
Melway Ref: 86 C9

Sandringham Foreshore Association

President: Dr Vicki Karalis
Contact: PO Box 52, Sandringham, 3191
Email: sandyforeshore@optusnet.com.au
Website: sandringhamforeshore.tumblr.com

School Groups

Firbank Girls Grammar

Contact: Mary-Ellen Johnson
Phone: (03) 9591 5188 **Email:** mjohnson@firbank.vic.edu.au

St Leonard's College Conservation Group

Contact: Simon Daniels
Phone: (03) 9909 9300 **Email:** simon.daniels@stleonards.vic.edu.au

banksia 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.

Editor
Damien Van Trier
Manager Open Space,
Recreation and Wellbeing

Content Coordinator
Kristi High
0407 366 466

Copy deadlines
Spring 2017
Friday 4 August for Spring edition

Banksia Bulletin is published quarterly by Bayside City Council to service people interested in enjoying and protecting the local environment.

If you would like to be added to the Banksia Bulletin mailing list, please contact Bayside City Council on 9599 4444 or email: banksia@bayside.vic.gov.au
Please indicate whether you would prefer to receive your Banksia Bulletin by email or via post.

Corporate Centre
PO Box 27 Royal Avenue
Sandringham VIC 3191
Telephone: 9599 4444
www.bayside.vic.gov.au
banksia@bayside.vic.gov.au
Hours of business
8.30am–5pm
Monday–Friday
(except public holidays)

Bayside City Council

Do you want to know more about Bayside and the Banksia Bulletin?

Please refer to our website
www.bayside.vic.gov.au

Bayside
CITY COUNCIL

Photo: Donald MacDonald Reserve, ecological controlled burn by Pauline Reynolds