

banksia

bulletin

summer 2021-22

A boost for mistletoes

New birds for Bayside

**Sacred Kingfisher
spotted**



Bayside
CITY COUNCIL

From the Mayor

Welcome to Summer in Bayside and the last edition of *Banksia Bulletin* for 2021.

On behalf of my fellow Councillors and staff, I would like to acknowledge the ongoing work our volunteers have undertaken this year, in disruptive circumstances, to care for and maintain our heathlands, reserves and precious foreshore.

We all know how much our natural environment means to you, as it does to all of us, and a second year of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions resulted in interrupted working bees throughout the year.

However, our local environment is looking vibrant and healthy, well maintained, and ready for Bayside residents and visitors to enjoy this summer. Thank you to all the Friends groups and volunteers who play a significant role to enhance and protect our local flora and fauna.

Jenny Talbot, a long-standing convenor of Brighton Dunes has decided to stand down from her role and hand over the reins to George Leighfield.

We extend a huge amount of gratitude to Jenny for the years of work she has put in at Dr Jim Willis Reserve, which we know as Brighton Dunes. Thank you also to George for stepping in as convenor of this Friends group.

Recently, we lost a very valued member of our community, Robert Whiteway OAM, who we all knew as Bob. Our sincere condolences to Bob's family and friends. He leaves behind a legacy for us all in the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary and we owe it to Bob to continue his work in protecting the coastal and marine environment and ensure it lives on.

Please enjoy *Banksia Bulletin Summer 2021-22* and thank you to all the volunteers who have contributed



stories, photographs and ideas to this year's fantastic editions.

Take care over the holiday season and I look forward to seeing you all in 2022.

Cr Alex del Porto
Mayor



Matchstick Grasshopper, *Vandiemella viatica*, photographed in Sandringham. Photo by John Eichler

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NEW BIRDS FOR BAYSIDE



HEY THERE GRASSHOPPER



'TIS THE SEASON FOR SNAKES

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Hairy Spinifex (*Spinifex*)



Plants of Bayside

Words and photo by Aaron Hurrell,
Citywide Bushland Crew

Hairy Spinifex

The Hairy Spinifex or *Spinifex* is a coastal growing plant that requires sandy soils, which are extremely well drained in full sun.

It is an important plant used to help stabilise sand dunes from erosion. This strong perennial grass produces long creeping runners, growing 30-60cm high and 1.5-4m wide.

The leaves are flat and silvery in colour, covered densely with silky hairs that grow at thickened nodes along the runners.

Spinifex has both male and female flowers. The male flowerhead is orange/brown in colour and on stalks. The female flowerhead is a spherical cluster, around 22-25 cm wide, that is silvery green to straw in colour. The flowers are known to break off and roll along the beach like tumbleweed.

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



have
your
say

Consultation coming soon

Council's Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) will be out for consultation in February 2022.

The first phase of consultation to inform the draft plan was held in October and November 2021, which asked for the community's views on pet-related issues including dog-poop disposal, off-leash times, on-leash rules, and wandering cats.

Council is now reviewing and analysing community feedback to develop actions for the next four years.

All Victorian councils are required to have a DAMP under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, which outlines policies, practices, and programs for domestic animals (primarily dogs and cats). It covers responsible pet ownership, complaint handling, lost animals, registration, off-leash areas and compliance with relevant state and local laws.

View Council's current DAMP and stay up-to-date with the **development of the new DAMP**.

Thank you, Jenny Talbot

Story by Jo Hurse

Citywide Bushland & Nursery Operations Supervisor

Photo by Pauline Reynolds

It is with great sadness and appreciation that we farewell Jenny Talbot as Co-convenor (alongside Elizabeth McQuire) of the Friends of Brighton Dunes (Dr Jim Willis Reserve). Jenny has been in this role since 1996 and an advocate for preserving the precious dune system since 1994. She has given tirelessly of her time.

Always present every Tuesday of the month between 8am and 10am to tackle the weeds, revegetate, keep an eye on the reserve in general and complete other jobs that may arise, Jenny and the group have worked to regenerate the unique dune area between Brighton Life Saving Club and Were Street using the 'Bradley method' – hands-on weeding from high quality vegetation to areas of low weed control.

The dunes were named to honour famous Melbourne botanist, Dr Jim Willis. He led the Friends group on a walk, pointing out the botanical uniqueness of the site, in the early days.

During this time there have been several different staff from the Citywide Bushland Crew maintaining the Dr Jim Willis Reserve, who have always enjoyed Jenny's company and dedication. They have also learnt from her wonderful accounts of oral history of this area.

When I was the 'Bushland person' attending working bees, Jenny gave me a handwritten note that is still above my desk. It reads:

"In July 1994 Dr Jim Willis gave us a letter saying not one inch of the dunes should be destroyed it was so botanically significant most of the natural vegetation between Port Melbourne and Sandringham has been destroyed."



In September 1994, he led us on a very important three hour walk through the dunes, identifying plant communities and species. He said fire had never been part of the ecology of the foreshore."

We all wish Jenny all the best and are extremely grateful for her tireless hours of volunteering.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome George Leighfield to the position of Co-convenor of Brighton Dunes. George has been volunteering with the Friends group for some time and is very committed to the group and to the reserve.



SUMMER BY THE SEA

Amateur Naturalist Challenge

The State Government is running a contest for budding presenters to share their stories about Victoria's marine and coastal environment as part of the Coastcare Summer by the Sea program.

Make a short movie or visual presentation and submit it to the amateur naturalist challenge.

Presentations could include profiling a group that's doing some great work, sharing a story about your local or favourite spot. Other ideas include creature features, educational pieces on local ecosystems, local project highlights, cultural or historical knowledge or conservation efforts.

Find out more about how to enter.



Local mistletoes to get a boost



Story by Rob Saunders

Convenor Friends of Long Hollow Heathland

Photos by Pauline Reynolds

Not that long ago, many arborists and horticulturists would have seen a mistletoe in a tree and thought *'That is a parasite and will kill the tree. Get rid of it'*. But awareness of the important ecological roles of mistletoes is growing and attitudes are becoming more positive.

It turns out that mistletoes are vital to biodiversity and there is much to be gained by protecting them. For a quick introduction, watch **A Sucker for Biodiversity, which aired on the ABC in 2019**. It features Professor David Watson and Millie Ross from *Gardening Australia*.

In fact, mistletoes are only partly parasitic. While they obtain water and nutrients from their host trees, they also produce their own energy by photosynthesis. The leaves and flowers dropped by mistletoes return concentrated minerals to the soil.

Mistletoes may even benefit their hosts by attracting beneficial insects and insectivores. According to a **2002 report by the Victorian Government department (named at the time Natural Resources and Environment)**, 41 species of birds feed from mistletoe flowers and some feed exclusively from mistletoes at certain times of the year.

Mistletoebirds and Painted Honeyeaters depend on the fruits of mistletoe for their survival.

The nectar of flowering mistletoes attracts butterflies, moths and other



Ever wondered why mistletoe and Christmas are so intertwined?

Read Charles Sturt University Professor in Ecology David M Watson's article published in *The Conversation* (2015), **'Mistletoe: the kiss of life for healthy forests'**.

invertebrates. Several butterflies have developed unique associations with mistletoe. For example, caterpillars of the Imperial Jezebel Butterfly feed exclusively on mistletoe. More complex relationships occur with the Genoveva Azure Butterfly, where ants escort the caterpillars to feed at night on Box Mistletoe, and then return them to their nest for daytime shelter. In return, the ants receive sugary secretions from the caterpillars.

Locally, indigenous mistletoes have declined dramatically in the

last 20 years. A combination of the Millennium Drought and widespread loss of larger trees, due to age, damage and development pressures, has reduced the number, and probably the diversity, of indigenous mistletoes.

Bayside City Council recently voted to receive a report at the April 2022 Council Meeting about working with environmental Friends groups to audit and protect current mistletoe populations within Bayside. This could include the possible trial of a Mistletoe Propagation Project within Bayside.

Readers of *Banksia Bulletin* may have followed my early experiments in propagating mistletoes with Michael Norris dating back to February 2016. Those efforts produced one strong healthy Creeping Mistletoe in a Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) at Long Hollow. It flowered for the first time in January 2020, and in 2021 I managed to collect and plant about 10 ripe berries from it.

At least one of them has now germinated.

Gio Fitzpatrick has also been busy planting mistletoes around Elster Creek. He has taken the process to a whole new level, with some innovative equipment and a range of species. After 'planting' more than 5,000 berries, Gio says the Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve has about 40 healthy seedlings.

Watch out for more news and tips on how to propagate mistletoes and manage existing plants in your own trees.

Records of mistletoes can be sent to Michael Norris via menorris@ozemail.com.au to add to the database.

VALE

Robert 'Bob' Whiteway OAM

We thank Bob Whiteway for his work to conserve Victoria's marine environment.

Story compiled by Bayside Friends and Bayside City Council

Bayside Friends groups, volunteers and Council pay tribute to well-respected environmentalist and member of our community, Robert 'Bob' Whiteway OAM.

Bob had a lifelong passion for the environment and was dedicated to protecting the coastal and marine environment.

He will be especially remembered for his pivotal leadership role in the nomination and eventual proclamation of the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary in 2002, and his roles as the inaugural President of Marine Care Ricketts Point and as the immediate Past President of the Black Rock Association. Bob is a Life Member of both these groups.

Among Bob's many achievements was the eradication of bone seed, an exogenous plant that came from South Africa, which resulted in the Black Rock and Sandringham area being left in its original state and earned him the nickname 'Bone Seed Bob'.

He was also instrumental in the preservation of Cheltenham Road. In the 1990s he successfully campaigned against concrete and asphalt paths and gutters along with electric overhead cables being placed underground.

A man of great foresight, Bob was a tireless lobbyist to both Victoria and local governments for over a decade and he ensured the marine environment was protected for future generations.

Bob's conservation efforts were well recognised. We will all remember him

as the recipient of the Victoria Coastal Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2002, the Bayside Citizen of the Year 2003, and the prestigious Order of Australia Medal in 2013 for his contribution to conservation and the environment.

Bob had a unique ability to connect with people, both young and old. He was a great educator and encouraged people to love and care for the environment through his enthusiastic speaker engagements.

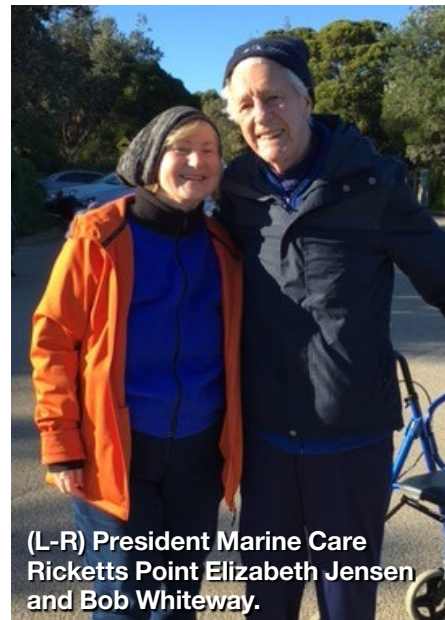
Victorians owe Bob a great debt of gratitude for his foresight and resilience in preserving this precious area.

"Bob is a respected environmentalist who will be missed greatly by us all. Bob was always welcoming of new volunteers who came to assist and was willing to pass on his vast knowledge with good natured guidance and positive advocacy.

Craig Brunnen, BRASCA President



Bob was an avid snorkeller, pictured here in winter 2020.



(L-R) President Marine Care Ricketts Point Elizabeth Jensen and Bob Whiteway.

"Warm, friendly and humble, Bob was a geography, history, economics and physical education teacher at Beaumaris High School for more than 35 years. He gave his students a great love of, and passion for, this unique environment. He taught them about marine life on the beach itself – something many of his students still fondly remember. It is because of Bob that we now have the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary."

Elizabeth Jensen, President, Marine Care Ricketts Point

Spotting the elusive Sacred Kingfisher

Story by Jarryd Linehan

Citywide Bushland Crew member

Photos by Cameron Arden

Citywide Bushland Crew member

It was Friday afternoon and the bushland team and I were packing up from a day of weeding the 2021 ecological burn at the Donald MacDonald Reserve.

We jumped in the trucks and were headed back to the depot when I saw a quick flash of blue pass by the front of the truck and then settle on a tall dead Tea tree in the bushes nearby.

I knew instantly that this wasn't one of the usual suspects like a Red Wattlebird, Grey Butcherbird or Noisy Miner but something I had never seen before — a beautiful Sacred Kingfisher!

I leapt out of the truck to get a better look at the bird and unsuccessfully tried to take some photos with my phone camera.

My workmates in the truck behind picked up on my excitement and luckily bushland team member Cameron Arden had a camera nearby and snapped a couple of photos before the bird went on its way.

I have been a keen birdwatcher for the last couple of years and have a particular fondness for the Kingfisher.



I would be on the lookout for the Sacred Kingfisher on many birdwatching adventures at places like Braeside Park, Edithvale Swamp and the Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve, or camping trips in the Otways, Murray River or far East Gippsland.

It always managed to elude me, and I was happy to settle for sightings of its smaller relative the Azure Kingfisher. I think it was especially exciting to see the Sacred Kingfisher in my local area as it reminded me that we don't need to go far to see special wildlife or reconnect with nature.

Sacred Kingfishers occur all over Australia except in the desert regions that are devoid of trees. In Melbourne, Sacred Kingfishers are migrants that

typically arrive in spring and then depart in early autumn, heading for northern Australia and sometimes beyond to New Guinea, Indonesia, New Caledonia and New Zealand.

Sacred Kingfishers will typically feed on the land, eating insects and small reptiles but may also eat fish, crustaceans and amphibians if the opportunity arises.

Most Kingfishers perch close to the water on low-hanging branches, but the Sacred Kingfishers perch on a tree's highest branches, utilising its strong eyesight and helping it to hunt effectively.

Keep your eyes peeled over the next few months and you may be lucky enough to encounter this beautiful bird!

New birds for Bayside



Black-faced Monarch. Published under a Creative Commons license

By Michael Norris

Whether you love birds for their plumage, songs, behaviour, or what they contribute to ecosystems, it is always enthralling to encounter a new species.

Bayside is a great place for that. I reckon that at least 255 have been recorded here. That does not include a dozen or so species that have escaped from aviaries, or hybrids.

Since 2017 I have added five species to the list. Why? Because it is simply the result of my judgements about the reliability of observers and the evidence they provided.

The easiest records to accept involve good photographs. Val Stajsic published two on eBird, one of the best websites for sharing your bird records.

In 2018 the Gull-billed Tern, pictured opposite, was on a rock platform at

Ricketts Point, with two Black-winged Stilts behind it. The species was rare in Port Phillip but is being recorded more often. It is the eighth sort of tern seen there, with the two smallest – the Fairly and Little Terns – absent for many years. The Gull-billed species can be distinguished by its heavy bill. Another was recorded in 2020.

Val also photographed a handsome Pied Butcherbird in nearby bushland in 2019. It is very rare south of the divide and easily told from our local Grey Butcherbird – also a great songster – by its all-black head and upper breast.

It is much trickier to assess records with no photographs to back them up. In the old days you would shoot the bird to prove what you had seen, but when I started birding it was mandatory to provide sketches and notes of weather, plumage, habitat, behaviour, and more.



Pied Butcherbird by Val Stajsic

However, I had little hesitation in accepting a record of a Black-faced Monarch that Alan Sherlock discovered in late 2019 in his garden shed near Beach Road. I trust his observational skills and it is a very distinctive species that is hard to mistake for anything other than monarchs that are very rare in Victoria. The Black-faced species seems to have been spreading from its usual south Gippsland haunts. Alan's main reservation was that it seemed quite tame, but I have found no trace of them being kept in aviaries.

The next year I had, through the Friends of Native Wildlife, a report of a Varied Sitella in the foreshore nearby. In contrast to the other 'new' species, it is sociable and breeds not far away, although in woodland habitats that we have largely lost. I didn't know the observer, Heather Hanstein, and asked all sorts of questions. She obviously

Satin Bowerbird by Mary Parry



Gull-billed Tern by Val Stajsic

knows local birds well and was very clear: a small bird about the size of a Thornbill, seen from a short distance with her partner. Yellow bill and legs, brownish with streaked underparts, and definitely not a Noisy Miner! Only the Varied Sitella fits that description.

The most recent addition to the Bayside list is the Satin Bowerbird, with at least two individuals recorded in 2021. National birding celebrity Sean Dooley saw one in flight near his Beaumaris home in March, and in May watched an adult male, with its iridescent blue-black sheen, in a near neighbour's garden. It was displaying to a – larger – magpie! And then in August, Mary Parry found another male in her Hampton garden. Her photograph shows it was changing from green to black and so about six years old.

I wonder what our next new species will be?



Varied Sitella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*). Published under a Creative Commons license



Hey there grasshopper

Disappearing Grasshopper, *Schizobothrus flavovittatus*, photographed in Brighton.

Bayside's Grasshoppers

Story and photos by John Eichler

More than 70 species of grasshoppers occur in Victoria and at least 12 of these can be found in Bayside.

All local grasshoppers are plant feeders. Although closely related to crickets and katydids, grasshoppers differ in having short antennae.

At about 70mm, the Giant Slant-face Grasshopper is Bayside's largest while the Pygmy Grasshopper is the smallest, measuring about 10mm in length.

Two of Bayside's grasshoppers, the Matchstick and Common Psednura, are flightless and each is known from only one reserve.

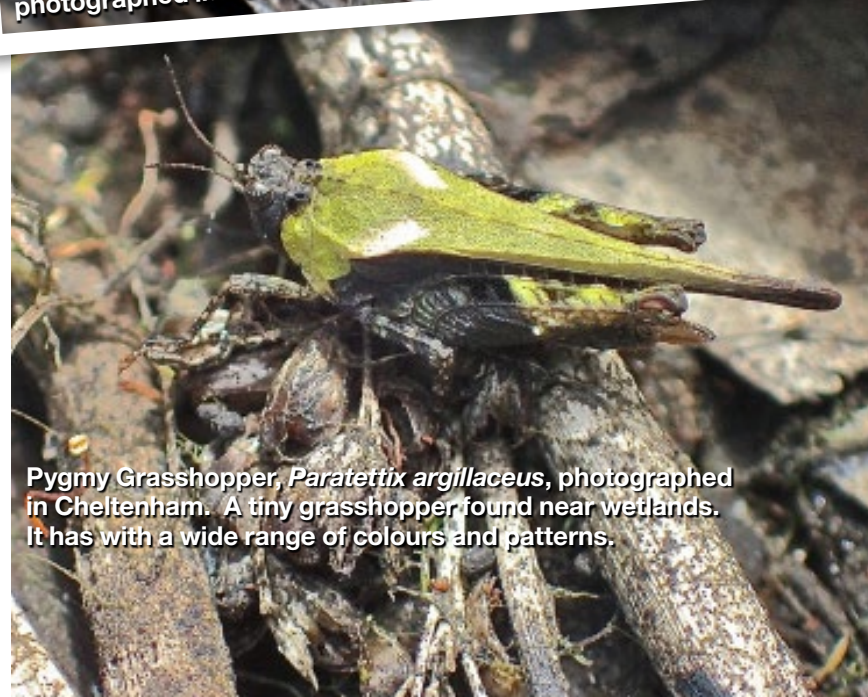
Together these factors mean that these species are at risk of becoming locally extinct because they are incapable of dispersing to other reserves.



Common Gumleaf Grasshopper, *Goniocera australasiae*, photographed in Beaumaris. This is a nymph or juvenile specimen.



Yellow winged Locust, *Gastrimargus musicus*, photographed in Beaumaris.



Pygmy Grasshopper, *Paratettix argillaceus*, photographed in Cheltenham. A tiny grasshopper found near wetlands. It has with a wide range of colours and patterns.



The most common local species is the Wingless Grasshopper, *Phaulacridium vittatum*, photographed in Cheltenham. This grasshopper has short wings rather than being wingless as the common name suggests.



Giant Slant-face Grasshopper, *Acrida conica*, photographed in Black Rock.



Common Macrotona, *Macrotona australis*, photographed in Sandringham. It differs from Inland Macrotona in having a black face.



Australian Plague Locust, *Chortoicetes terminifera*, photographed in Sandringham. This grasshopper is not seen in large swarms locally.



Bark-mimicking Grasshopper, *Coryphistes ruricola*, photographed in Beaumaris.



Inland Macrotona, *Macrotona securiformis*, photographed in Beaumaris.

Bayside's other species of flightless grasshopper is the Common Psednura, *Psednura pedestris*, photographed in Beaumaris. It is often found pressed against the cylindrical leaves of rushes.

Flightless Vandiemenna Matchstick Grasshopper sighted at Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary

Story and photos by Ary Hoffmann and Michael Kearney
University of Melbourne

As well as being home to many unique marsupials, lizards and birds, Australia is also home to some unusual radiations of insects.

One of these is the Matchstick Grasshopper group known scientifically as morabines, found throughout the continent from wet coastal areas all the way to the dry interior.

In Victoria, we have both threatened and non-threatened morabine species. One of the threatened species, known as Key's Matchstick Grasshopper (*Keyacris scurra*), is now only found in the Omeo region of Victoria, despite once being widespread in central and northern Victoria.

Another species, the Vandiemenna Matchstick, persists in a few remnant spots in the Greater Melbourne area as well as further afield, although its habitat is also shrinking due to housing developments and the conversion of woodland and grassland to agriculture and the degradation of remaining remnants due to weed invasion.

This species can be quite common if the right conditions exist. It typically needs some open space where it can warm up in the sun, some low shrub or native grass like *Poa*, *Daniella* or *Lomandra* where it can hide from predators and bad weather, and some food plants. It is quite polyphagous, meaning that it can eat a range of forbs and shrubs, although it has a strong preference for native daisies such as *Chrysocephalum* spp. and appears to like *Cassinia Kunzea*. In the lab we rear it on *Bidgee Widgee* (*Acaena novae-zelandiae*).

Although this species can be quite common under the right conditions (with densities reaching several grasshoppers per square metre), it is highly sensitive to weed invasion and pesticide applications as well as inappropriate fire regimes. Once these unusual animals are lost from an area, they cannot become re-established because of their flightless nature.

Environmentalist and regular contributor to *Banksia Bulletin* John Eichler posted a record of this grasshopper for iNaturalist that was spotted in Bay Road Heathland Reserve.

We decided to come out to this remnant patch to investigate it further.

Arriving on a Saturday morning after obtaining permits to travel outside our 10-kilometre zone, we were disappointed to find the heathland locked up while at the same time very impressed by the efforts to protect and manage the site.



The endangered Key's Matchstick Grasshopper



A male Vandiemenna Matchstick Grasshopper from remnant vegetation in Wattle Glen, Melbourne

After researching who we might contact about accessing the site, Pauline Reynolds agreed to meet with us that morning and brought eagle-eyed John along with her.

After a short period of searching with John and Pauline, we readily located the Vandiemenna Matchstick in healthy vegetation. We collected a small sample of grasshoppers for DNA analysis to help us discover more about the uniqueness of the Bay Road population as well as whether it suffers from inbreeding. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate this species at the other heathland remnants we visited within the Bayside area, despite some sites having ideal vegetation.

At this stage we are unsure why Vandiemenna Matchsticks have been lost from other reserves. It may be the fire regimes because the grasshopper has an annual life cycle and development occurs across winter when burns are more likely to be undertaken. Or perhaps in the past the area was closely grazed by domestic animals, a likely reason why this species and related matchsticks have been lost from many other parts of Victoria.

The good news is that these grasshoppers can most likely be reintroduced into an area quite easily, and we have started to undertake trial translocations into both remnant and revegetated areas around Melbourne to test the feasibility of this strategy.

The species could thereby be reintroduced back into remnant patches



Hiroimi Yagui, a University of Melbourne PhD student working with Ary and Michael, searches for the Vandiemenna Matchstick Grasshopper in the Bay Road Heathland Reserve.

where it would have formerly occurred. This process is known as 'rewilding' or 'renaturing' and is normally considered within the context of mammal translocations. It should be much easier to undertake with insects and other invertebrates and once they have been reintroduced, the Vandiemenna Matchsticks will stay within the reserve because of their flightless habit and plant requirements.

Following successful translocation, we anticipate benefits for faunal biodiversity. Matchsticks are one of the few grasshoppers active in winter when food supply for many animals is limiting, which means they can help sustain populations of lizards, mantids and small birds. We are keen to track these benefits over time through citizen science.

A bonus is that while Vandiemenna Matchsticks are small in size, they provide excellent educational opportunities. They can be readily observed and caught in their natural environment where they do not harm the local vegetation, and they can also be maintained for a period in captivity. We see opportunities to engage schools in monitoring the grasshoppers, especially their life cycle patterns.

Hopefully we can bring this grasshopper back to existing heathland remnants and other revegetation areas in the Bayside region to help secure its future, enrich food webs and, of course, delight naturalists young and old.



Australian birds painted by one of our volunteers

Story and original artwork by Bayside Nursery Volunteer Valda Jenkins

Valda's art photographed by Pauline Reynolds

We are so fortunate having our beautiful birds. I love to paint them. I paint from photographs and am lucky to have a friend, an award-winning bird photographer, who has given me permission to use her photographs.

When I heard about the opportunity to be a volunteer at Bayside Community

Nursery, I quickly joined the list to work there. Since early this year, in between lockdowns, I have really enjoyed working with other volunteers and staff. Once a week, I help with the propagation of our local plants. Knowing that these plants are going to grow and provide food for our native birds and bees is very satisfying.

Eastern Rosella

This bird is native to south-east Australia and in Tasmania. In the wild they breed in hollows high up in trees.



Yellowtail Black Cockatoo

This bird is quite raucous. They like eating pine and banksia cones. Recently, I saw a number of them feasting on seeds in trees in Beach Road Beaumaris, making a lot of noise.



Eastern Spinebill

Their long fine beak helps them to obtain nectar, especially from tubular shaped flowers. I have painted it on Eucalyptus Ficifolia, one of the most commonly planted ornamental eucalypts.



Helmeted Honeyeater

This bird is critically endangered, only a small population exists in Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve. Loss of habitat is the primary threat.



Superb Fairy Wren

I have often seen these birds flying in and out of the bushes on the clifftop walk in Sandringham. I have painted this one with a grevillea I have growing in my garden.





The Lowland Copperhead (*Austrelaps superbus*), a common inhabitant of the most disturbed habitats across southern Victoria.

'Tis the season for snakes

There have been several snake sightings down on the foreshore this summer so please look where you're walking and have your dogs on-leash to keep them safe. When left alone, snakes present little or no danger to people.

Here, we'll share some common myths and misconceptions about snakes published by Museums Victoria, provide some tips on what to do if you see a snake and how to administer first aid if you or someone you know is bitten.



The Tiger Snake is one of the most common snake species spotted in Bayside. Photo courtesy of Bayside Wildlife Facebook.

Mythbusting

Blue-tongue Lizards and Shinglebacks will discourage snakes in your garden

Snakes eat frogs, lizards and even other snakes. Newly-hatched snakes of various species may fall prey to Blue-tongue Lizards, but as the snakes grow the reverse is usually true.

If a snake's head is cut off it will stay alive until sundown

This myth seems to be particularly popular in rural Australia and may be based on the fact that a snake's body will continue to writhe for some time after decapitation, but this story is not even remotely true.

Snakes always travel in pairs

In general, the only time two snakes are in the same place is during courtship and mating. Otherwise the larger snake will usually kill and eat the smaller one.

Clearing up misconceptions

Snakes are cold and slimy

No, in fact, snake skin is dry and, depending on the surrounding temperature, can be quite warm and soft.

All snakes are poisonous

Technically snakes are venomous, not poisonous. Australia has the highest proportion of venomous native snakes in the world (100 out of the 140 species of land snakes), although only a handful can give a fatal bite to humans.

Snakes are out to get you

Humans are larger, generally faster and stronger than Australian snakes.

When you encounter a snake it is usually caught off guard (as you are), but the vast majority of encounters are avoided by a snake vanishing as soon as it hears you coming.

A surprised snake will pick the nearest escape route and aim to disappear as quickly as possible.

Snake behaviour can also become more erratic in spring during the breeding season, and females become more defensive if eggs or young are nearby. However, the vast majority of bites to humans in Australia occur because someone decided not to leave a snake alone.

Treating a snake bite

Do

- ✓ Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage
- ✓ Splint the bandaged limb
- ✓ Ensure the patient remains still
- ✓ Call triple zero (000) for medical assistance

Don't

- ✗ Wash or cut around the bitten area
- ✗ Use an arterial tourniquet
- ✗ Try to capture the snake

What to do if you see a snake

If you see a snake, keep calm and move yourself and anyone with you (including pets) away from the area. Don't attempt to capture or harm snakes. All snakes are protected fauna under the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

If you see a snake in Bayside, please call Council on 9599 4444 to install warning signs in the area to alert others. Council does not generally remove snakes unless they are persistently appearing around highly visited areas like foreshore playgrounds.

How to keep snakes out of your yard

- Keep your property rodent-free
- Remove shelters such as sheets of tin on the ground and piles of rocks or firewood
- Keep a clear area around your house, cut grass low, remove fallen branches, and prune overgrown bushes
- Patch up holes in buildings

Learn more from Museums Victoria.
Learn more about administering first aid for a snake bite.



Gazania linearis and *Gazania rigens* (and their hybrids) have become widespread across Victoria, and are often mistaken as indigenous wildflowers. (Photo: Bec James, DELWP)



The moss *Pseudoscleropodium purum* (Neat Feather-moss) invades grasslands and grassy woodlands. (Photo: David Meagher)



Opuntia robusta (Wheel Cactus) is spreading in many parts of Victoria, including Terrick Terrick National Park, north of Bendigo. (Photo: Kate Blood)



Limonium hyblaenum (Sicilian Sea Lavender) is smothering coastal areas in Victoria. (Photo: Kate Blood)

Comprehensive report tackles ecological decline in Victoria

Story supplied by Parliament Victoria

Photos sourced from the Victorian Government's *Advisory list of environmental weeds in Victoria*

Victoria's ecosystem is facing major threats from noxious weeds and invasive species, climate change and habitat loss and fragmentation, a Legislative Council Committee inquiry has found.

The Environment and Planning Committee has made a total of 74 recommendations to address the range of problems associated with Victoria's declining ecosystem in its report tabled in the Legislative Council today.

"We have listened to the perspectives of many Victorians, including scientists, First Peoples, environmentalists, farmers and many more to inform our conclusions," said Committee Chair Sonja Terpstra.

The 746-page report covers two volumes and contains 54 findings after the Committee received 950 submissions and held 16 days of hearings.

"Despite the size and scope of this Committee's report there is still a great deal more work to be done to address the environmental challenges facing our state," said Ms Terpstra.

"We have recommended the government think about referring a parliamentary inquiry into the health of rivers, and the marine environment."

The report recommends the government review the legislative framework for managing invasive species to consider the economic impact of introduced pests, to review early intervention measures, and to ensure the legislation's focus is on preserving biodiversity values.

It recommends the Victorian government phase out the use of

1080 bait to control invasive species, implement a more consistent and effective approach to cat management and trial the reintroduction of dingoes as an apex predator.

The report finds that climate change is already driving ecosystem decline across Victoria with devastating consequences for flora and fauna.

It recommends the government and research partners conduct further analysis to improve localised climate projections for both agricultural and biodiversity values.

The report also makes recommendations around the protection of threatened species, improving land management, improving governance and improving monitoring, compliance and enforcement.

Read the full report and recommendations.



Sign up to EPA's beach report

Beach report season is now open and it is recommended to always check for signs of pollution before you swim.

The EPA strongly recommends following this advice for healthy swimming:

- Avoid swimming near stormwater drains
- Avoid swimming for 48 hours after rain
- Try not to swallow water during recreation
- Cover cuts and scratches with waterproof bandages
- Wash your skin with soap after touching the water and shower after swimming

The EPA forecasts water quality for 36 beaches in Port Phillip Bay and issues alerts when there is an issue affecting a waterbody in Victoria. In poor water quality, bacteria may lead to illness like gastroenteritis.



Sign up for text messages to be sent directly to your phone when pollution may be high in our local beaches.



Avoid swimming near stormwater or river outlets 24-48 hours after heavy rain.

Friends Groups

Friends of Balcombe Park

Convenor: Ian O'Loughlin
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Friends of Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary

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Friends of Beaumaris Reserve

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Friends of Brighton Dunes

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Friends of Cheltenham Park

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Friends of Donald MacDonald Reserve

Convenor: Kim Croker
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Friends of Elster Creek

President: Thijs Honningh
Secretary: Anubhooti Jaiswal
Email: friendsofelstercreek@gmail.com
Meeting point: Elwood Canal, Glen Huntly Road Bridge

Friends of George Street Reserve

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Friends of Gramatan Avenue Heathland

Convenor: Ken Rendell
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Friends of Long Hollow Heathland

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Friends of Merindah Park & Urban Forest

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Friends of Mother Stock Areas

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Friends of Ricketts Point

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Friends of Table Rock

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Environment Groups

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Elsternwick Park Association

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Marine Care Ricketts Point Inc

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President: Dr Vicki Karalis
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School Groups

St Leonard's College Conservation Group

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Rules for dogs on beaches

Summer restrictions for dogs on beaches are now in place until 31 March 2022. The restrictions prohibit dogs on many Bayside beaches and foreshore areas during peak daylight hours and vary from beach to beach. All areas adjacent to beaches, including footpaths and reserves, are on-leash always.

Check the walking map for restrictions at your favourite beach or location signage.

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

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



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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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.

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www.bayside.vic.gov.au



Raspberry Slime Mould (*Tubifera ferruginosa*)
by Pauline Reynolds