



Friends Group Network

Protecting the peninsula's biodiversity



MORNINGTON
PENINSULA
Shire

Welcome

Mornington Peninsula Friends Group Network acknowledges and pays respect to the elders, families and ancestors of the Bunurong people, who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years.

We acknowledge that the land on which we work and volunteer is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong peoples' living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.

Hi Friends!

I would first like to start by recognising National Volunteer Week, which ran during the week of May 15-21.

This year the theme was *The Change Makers* and is a celebration of our power to drive positive, on-ground change and ensure that volunteering is inclusive for all members of the community.

We want to acknowledge and thank you for all that you do to protect and conserve the Mornington Peninsula's environment and for being *Change Makers*.

Environmental volunteering connects communities to nature and to each other, and we value all your efforts.

The Network would like to welcome James Rose, the newly appointed Team Leader of the Natural Systems Team. James has a wealth of industry knowledge, previously leading the biodiversity team at Knox City Council.

James is very keen to see firsthand the important work our volunteers undertake and to meet all the groups, so you may have the opportunity to connect with James in the coming months.



We are now in the thick of planting season!

The network have a massive 9,000 tube stock to be planted right across the peninsula. This will have enormous benefits to the peninsula's biodiversity, from restoring canopy cover to helping increase species richness in our reserves.

An important component of revegetation is choosing the right location for each plant. If you have any questions regarding plant layout, a staff member from the Bushland Management Team will be able to help assess the site and find a suitable location.

Otherwise, Danielle and I are always here to help

Finally, the Mornington Peninsula Koala Conservation Group have many planting events scheduled on private properties throughout the peninsula this season.

If you are keen to volunteer somewhere a little different and to help our furry friends, visit the Eventbrite link:

[MPKC Events & Tree Planting Days - 2023 | Eventbrite](#)

All the best,
Hannah





Training our Bushland Management team

Jules Farquhar, Herpetology Research Officer at Monash University, recently came down to the Peninsula to deliver a series of workshops to staff from our Bushland Management Team.

The key theme was about reptile ecology and survey methods – with a focus on the nationally endangered Swamp Skink. This workshop is a follow on from recent fauna workshops held with Mal Legg last August. This helped to kick off our planned Swamp Skink monitoring program at Chinamans Creek, Drum Drum-Alloc Creek, Elizabeth Avenue, with the potential to include other reserves within the Tootgarook Wetlands and across the Peninsula in future.

We have in place a DEECA research permit to allow us to monitor for reptiles using artificial refuges, in areas where we undertake bushland management works. Collaborating with an experienced herpetologist has been really beneficial and the feedback from the bushland management staff was very positive, including *“the best personal development”*.

Importantly it has stirred a lot of discussion among project managers and crew leaders on adaptive approaches and holistic reserve management, which was one of the goals.



Jules Farquhar, Monash University, and our Bushland Management Team at Tootgarook wetlands

Do we really need a guard?

This planting season we have ordered 17 100 stakes and 9 000 guards for our Friends Group plantings. While these guards are an effective way of protecting the seedling from a range of challenges including browsing animals, herbicide drift or trampling. Have you ever considered if we really need to guard every seedling?

The white ‘milk carton’ guards our network use have a plastic wax coating that remains in the environment for a really, really long time, a few hundred years. The bamboo stakes are harvested in China and then shipped to Australia.

A better approach might be to look into whether the guard is needed at all. Seedlings planted at your reserve may not be exposed to any threats, reducing the need for tree guards.

Recent research in the UK suggests we should start by assuming we do not need a guard, then only use one if we need to protect the plant (Prof Mark Miodownik, University College London 2021). “Even if a guard is collected and recycled, the carbon footprint of planting the tree is at least double that of plastic-free planting”

You can view the article here: [Trees should be planted without plastic guards, says UK study | Environment | The Guardian](#)





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Introducing our new Fungi field guide

Pixies Parasol, Lawyers Wig and Jelly Tooth – welcome to the fascinating world of fungi!

Fungi colonise almost every terrestrial habitat. Some fungi grow in sand dunes, others in native grasslands, many appear in garden beds and lawns, but the greatest diversity of fungus species is usually found in woodlands and forests. This guide presents 96 of the more recognisable fungus species that grow in the range of habitats of the Mornington Peninsula.

We have collaborated with natural historian and environmental photographer Alison Pouliot to create a Fungi of the Mornington Peninsula Guide. The guide includes photos of over 90 types of fungi that can be found on the peninsula.

How to use the guide:

- Download or print the guide - choose from low, medium or high-resolution formats
- Head out to your nearest bushland reserve
- Use the guide to help identify your fungi finds.

Upload your fungi photos to [iNaturalist](https://www.iNaturalist.com) to record your sightings.

Download the guide:

[Fungi of the Mornington Peninsula - Low Res\(PDF, 4MB\)](#)

You can also hear Alison being interviewed on ABC 'Conversation' with Richard Fidler

[The alluring aliens of our forests - ABC Radio](#)



Splendid Red Skinhead
Cortinarius persplendendus
10cm high x 5cm wide
Soil (M)



Yellow Brain
Tremella mesenterica
5cm high x 10cm wide
Wood (S)



Blewit
Lepista nuda
10cm high x 15cm wide
Soil (S)



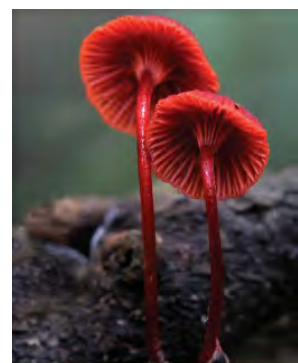
Rainbow Fungus
Trametes versicolor
5-7cm wide
Wood (S)



Mycena austrofilopes
12cm high x 2cm wide
Soil (S)



Smooth Cage
Ileodictyon gracile
8cm high x 8cm wide
Soil (S)



Ruby Bonnet
Cruentomycena viscidocruenta
3cm high x 0.5cm wide
Wood (S)



Fly Agaric
Amanita muscaria
10cm high x 12cm wide
Soil (M)



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What's been happening?

The McCrae Homestead and Coastal Group planting their annual allocation of plants at the May working bee.

This group has been working to protect the foreshore environment for over 25 years, rain, hail or shine!



The Friends of Slips Bushland Reserve in Blairgowrie enjoying a cuppa and biscuit after a recent working bee.

Hopefully somebody remembered to pack the doggie biscuits too!

Merricks-Coolart Landcare Group recently celebrated the completion of the first two stages of the 'Balnarring to the Bay Biolink' project. The group have coordinated the removal of over 250 pine trees and planted thousands of locally indigenous plants.



The Friends of Sorrento Foreshore enjoying a well-earned break after a morning of planting.

This reasonably new group successfully sought a State Government Coastcare Grant, enabling contractors to undertake woody and scrambling weed control. The area is now nearly completely cleared of woody weeds.



The Friends of Moonah Waren Reserve in Rye celebrating their efforts at the end of a monthly working bee, with head high piles of polygala stacked behind them. The group are making excellent progress since forming in 2019.





The 'reel big fish' mangrove restoration project

The Shire has partnered with OzFish and Melbourne Water to restore mangrove forests across Western Port. During February, 850 mangrove seedlings were planted along Hastings Foreshore. Restoration efforts were focused in areas surrounding established mangrove forest communities, which provide the greatest opportunity for plant survival and project success.

Planting mangroves is not as simple as it sounds due to the varied daily tides. After many trials over several years, OzFish have come up with a method that seems to have a great success rate. This method involves collecting mangrove seeds that have washed up on the shore, then attaching the seed to a bamboo stake with a rubber band and a cable tie. The bamboo stake can then be pushed into the ground ensuring that the seedling can take root and protect itself against changing tides.

Mangroves are valuable trees which provide fish habitat, store carbon, improve water quality and protect our foreshore from erosion. For more information about this project visit the OzFish website [here](#).



Cam Walls, MPS Natural Systems Team and Mel Barker, Western Port Biosphere Corporation.



Bamboo stakes pushed into the ground with a mangrove seed attached.

Nature Stewards

For the past 8 weeks, 20 participants have been attending the Nature Stewards program at a range of sites across the Peninsula.

The Nature Stewards program directly supports participants to gain knowledge, learn practical conservation land management skills, and to meet like-minded others in the local community.

During this time participants learn about the Victorian and local environment, on topics spanning geology, soils, climate, fungi, plants, animals, land management, volunteering and citizen science, and environmental interpretation. These topics are delivered from both Western and local Aboriginal community perspectives.

Bushland Management Team Anthony and I were fortunate enough to take the group for one of the afternoon field trips to Warringine Park (Bittern Coastal Reserve). Anthony has a wealth of knowledge at this site, and all the participants thoroughly enjoyed the session!



Anthony presenting to the Nature Steward participants



Protecting our Eucalypts

Indigenous eucalypt trees are an important component of the Mornington Peninsula's landscape, and in some areas a decline in eucalypt tree health has been considerably noticeable.

While there are several reasons that can contribute to the decline of an individual tree's health, one of the most common causes identified is the over-browsing of leaves by possums.

To help reduce the impacts of over-browsing, over the years the Shire has installed protective tree bands on selected eucalypt trees in bushland reserves and streetscapes in Mt Eliza, Mornington and Mt Martha.

The results of trees banded under this program have been encouraging, with some trees showing new flushes of leaf growth within a year of being banded.

Members of our Bushland Management Team have been busy this month assigning identification codes to previously banded trees. This is also a useful opportunity for collecting data on each individual tree, such as its DBH (Diameter at Breast Height) and the percentage of canopy cover present. Collecting this data will help to monitor changes to tree health and canopy in years to come.

This stage of project works is in preparation for upcoming maintenance works for banded trees, that may include band replacement or adjustment, and/or separation pruning.

Do you have a large, old eucalypt that needs protecting on your property?

Visit the Shire's [Protecting Eucalypt Trees](#) webpage for more information on the steps you can take.



Bushland Management Team Members assigning an identification code to a previously banded Coast Manna Gum. This tree had a DBH of an incredible 126cm!

Clean up Australia Day



Young and old, from the beach to the bush, more than 11,000 events were registered with over 750,000 people joining Clean Up Australia day events around Australia!

The Friends of Sunshine Reserve in Mount Martha once again held a community event along the Esplanade. The group collected an impressive 210kg of rubbish by 21 volunteers and in just two hours.

This year marks 24 years of the group participating in Clean Up Australia Day events. Estimating a total collection of rubbish removed over that period being 4,000kg!

Did you know?

You can recycle sunglasses and sneakers, blister-packs and basketballs, phones and plastic plant pots - and the options are growing weekly! But the trick is none of those items go in your kerbside bin...

Visit the webpage to find out more [Recycle right, mate! \(cleanup.org.au\)](http://cleanup.org.au)



In March, volunteers walking down the Esplanade collecting rubbish



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Unique UNESCO

Did you know the entire Mornington Peninsula Shire is recognised by UNESCO as an important Biosphere?

Western Port Biosphere Reserve is part of a global UNESCO network, connected to 738 Biosphere Reserves across 134 countries. The Biosphere Reserve is one of only five in Australia, and the only one in south-eastern Australia.

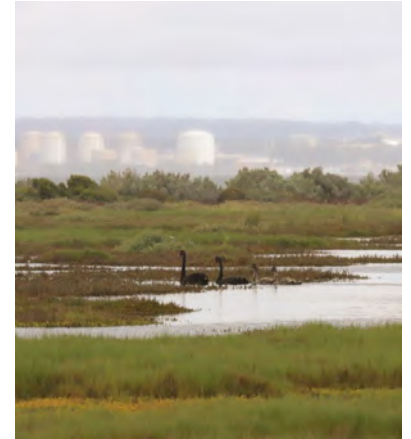
Western Port Biosphere Reserve is overseen by the Western Port Biosphere Foundation.

Mornington Peninsula Shire is proud to be part of the Western Port Biosphere Foundation. There are four other councils that are partly within the Reserve; Bass Coast Shire Council, Cardinia Shire Council, City of Casey and Frankston City Council. Both Phillip and French Islands, along with Western Port Bay, are also within the Reserve area.

Western Port Biosphere Foundation primary objectives are to achieve a sustainable balance between the goals of conserving biological diversity, promoting economic development, and maintaining associated cultural values.

The Foundation has worked with the Shire on a range of initiatives, with current projects including one at Haig Street Reserve in Bittern. Grant funding under the Queens Jubilee Commemorative Program was awarded to assist the Friends of Haig Street Reserve with planting, weeding and amenity projects.

To learn more or connect with us and our work within the Biosphere Reserve, find us at www.biosphere.org.au or through our social media channels.



A volunteer moving mulch at Haig street Reserve

Tidy Town Awards

The 41st Annual Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria's Tidy Towns & Cities - Sustainability Awards recognise, celebrate and share environmental achievements and strong community spirit amongst a range of applicants including community groups, education institutions, businesses and councils across Victoria.

These initiatives empower people, change behaviour, protect the environment, reduce waste, engage youth and indigenous communities, and promote community spirit and resiliency.

Have you got a project you are proud of that fits into the below categories?

education, community, energy, environment, litter, Heritage and Culture or Indigenous Culture

Entering the awards has many benefits including increased community participation, pride, ownership and responsibility for local environments. The Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria awards provides an opportunity to promote the inspiring initiatives being carried out in communities across Victoria.

Entries close June 18 2023

Click on the link to apply:
[Tidy Towns and Sustainable Cities Awards](http://awardsonline.net.au)
(awardsonline.net.au)

