



fotpin update #35 May 2021

AGM Issue

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It's been two years since our last AGM in May 2019, and it's hard to imagine two years that were more different. The 2019-20 year brought us record-breaking heat waves, fires, smoke, drought and destructive hailstorms, which left the reserve looking bare, with many trees dead or dying. By contrast, the 2020-21 year has brought us abundant rainfall, mild temperatures, a beautiful spring, a mild summer and an even more beautiful autumn. But it also brought problems of a different sort, including rampant weed growth that overwhelmed our capacity to keep weeds under control in the reserve. Despite these challenges, our weeding teams have continued to do a fabulous job of keeping the worst of the weeds under control, including cutting and bagging the seed heads from the weeds that we couldn't get to earlier. All their hard work will doubtless reap rewards in coming years and I am enormously grateful to all the weeding team volunteers for their continuing commitment and dedication.

Molonglo 3 Watermain Pipeline Revegetation

We were able to negotiate a grant of \$12,000 last year to help fund revegetation along the upper section of the Molonglo pipeline corridor. The failed revegetation attempt by the contractors hired for the job have left large areas that are very weedy and will be difficult to rehabilitate. However, there are areas where we can profitably promote the recovery of native vegetation either by hand sowing seed or by planting tube stock that we have raised from seed. This will be an ongoing project for several years to come, and one in which our active volunteers and the broader membership can be usefully involved. Once the funding has been released, we will purchase seed and will begin our revegetation efforts in spring of the coming year. Watch this space!

Weetangera Revegetation Project

While the Friends of the Pinnacle haven't had any large new planting events in the last couple of years, there has been ongoing revegetation work in the Weetangera paddock led by Len Taylor and his team. They have been doing some outstanding work promoting the restoration of native grasses and forbs both inside and outside exclosures in the Weetangera paddock. This has involved everything from gathering seed to sprouting the seed and raising tubestock, and has included both broadcast seeding and planting out homegrown seedlings. Len and his team are to be congratulated for the progress they have made in restoring native vegetation in that area. These efforts are also useful in pointing the way forward for future revegetation work.

Collaboration with St Francis Xavier College

Through the sterling efforts of Tim Gill, Len Taylor and weeding team leader Gilbert Hughes have made a useful contact with staff at Saint Francis Xavier College in Florey, which has led to a commitment by the school to send groups of students along on monthly working bees to help out our weeding teams through to the end of the year. These working bees will be led by Gilbert in the first instance and will be useful both in achieving better outcomes in weed control and, more importantly perhaps, in exposing the students to the reserve and its flora and fauna and raising awareness of the importance of the work we do in maintaining and improving the natural environment. The school has also very kindly offered to host some of Len's native daisy tubestock in their greenhouse over the winter so that they'll be ready to

plant out in the spring. I'd like to particularly thank Tim for his initiative in making this collaboration happen.

Guided Walks

Despite the restrictions necessitated by the pandemic, we have continued to hold our regular wildflower and birdwatching walks over the last two years, with particularly outstanding results during the Spring 2020 wildflower walk, which benefited enormously from the good rainfall that followed the breaking of the drought in February 2020. My particular thanks to John Fitz Gerald and Nola McKeon for generously lending us their expertise as walk leaders.

Reserve Biodiversity

The indefatigable Warren has been compiling a list of the Pinnacle Nature Reserve [flora and fauna](#) species by combining fotpin's previous lists (mainly for plants and birds) with sightings reported to the [Canberra Nature Map](#). The list now includes more than 740 native species, including almost 220 native plant species, more than 110 native bird species and more than 270 native insect species. Here, I should definitely acknowledge the enormous contribution of Alison Milton to this effort, as she is responsible for a large number of these observations.

Of particular note in the last year (to birds, at least) has been the first known breeding records of Gang Gang Cockatoos at the reserve. This has coincided with an influx of relatively large numbers of Gang Gang Cockatoos, which may perhaps be a consequence of habitat loss in Namadgi and other nearby Gang Gang strongholds due to the devastating bushfires last year. This is a very exciting development for those of us who are interested in birds in particular and we hope that it is the beginning of a long-term trend.



Collage by Tom Cochrane showing the male Gang Gang in Weetangera paddock, the nest tree and the spot where the nest hole was located

Pinnacle Extension

Work in the Pinnacle Extension (environmental offset) is now being supervised by former ParkCare Ranger Craig Wainwright, who has brought his familiar enthusiasm and extensive experience to the task. He tells us that work in the offset is now in its "maintenance" phase, meaning that the budget will really only cover weed control from now on. However, Craig has used fencing material recycled from one of our old Grassland Restoration Project plots to provide additional protection for regenerating trees and shrubs. He also supervised a couple of ecological burns late last year that were designed to suppress weeds and encourage native groundcover plants. It is encouraging to see PCS using fire as a grassland management tool rather than simply a hazard reduction measure, and we hope that this is the beginning of a trend towards greater use of cool burns in this important role.

Coordinating Committee

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the committee for their hard work this year, in particular Mike Hall, who has bravely stepped up into the role of Treasurer this year and will continue in that role. I would also like to thank outgoing Committee member and former Treasurer Margo Hellyer, who has moved down to the coast. She was an energetic and valuable committee member who will be sorely missed.

Membership

Our membership and the number of people on our mailing list have continued to grow over time. Net membership has increased by 10% since May 2019 (from 95 to 104) and the total size of the email list by 20% (from 261 to 312).

AGM Report

This year's AGM was held, as usual, at Weetangera Primary School on Sunday May 16th. We had invited PCS Aboriginal Fire Officer Dean Freeman to be our guest speaker, but unfortunately he was unable to come as he had last-minute family business to attend to in Brungle, NSW. The meeting was attended by 16 members in all, and a new Coordinating Committee was elected, as follows:

Convenor: John Brannan

Secretary: no nominations (TBA)

Treasurer: Mike Hall

Ordinary Members: Warren Bond, Denise Hall, Len Taylor, Alana Wilkes

As I mentioned above, Mike Hall has stepped into the Treasurer's position to replace Margo Hellyer, but the other change is Warren stepping down from his acting role as Secretary. Members present were asked to consider nominating for the position of Secretary, but no-one put their hand up, so we are left, for the time being, without a Secretary. I will be sending out an appeal to the broader membership for someone to fill this position for the coming year.

My thanks as always to Weetangera Primary School for allowing us to use their staff room for the meeting, and thanks also to everyone who brought along the delicious snacks for afternoon tea. Despite the lack of a guest speaker, the meeting went very successfully with some interesting discussions stemming from my presentation of the Convenor's report. The [minutes from the AGM](#) are posted on the website

John Brannan
Convenor

May 28th, 2021