



## fotpin update #42 April 2023

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After months of rain and bogged, inaccessible tracks, the reserve is now completely dried out and is fully accessible again. Like last summer, the wet weather has meant that the reserve's wildflowers have put on a wonderful show, particularly the ubiquitous paper daisies. I thought last year was spectacular, but this year has been even better. Our knowledge of the diversity of native plants on the reserve has also increased further, with 16 species added to our list since last spring (including one considered rare or uncommon). Combined with the 46 added in the previous two years this is a 25% increase since 2020. Of course, like last year, the weeds have also benefited from the abundant moisture, as described later in this Update.

### **Interpretative Signage**

As mentioned in the last Update, we were successful in obtaining an ACT Government Environment grant to fund the design, fabrication and installation of several interpretive signs around the reserve and have set up a working group to address the task of their design and production. The group consists of myself, fotpin Secretary Anne, committee member Alana, and GCG graphic designer Suzanne Richardson. Our tasks include selecting locations and themes for the signs, composing text and selecting images for those themes, and coming up with consistent and attractive designs for the signs. The working group also needs to identify the acknowledgments that need to go on the sign, source any government logos that must be used, and otherwise ensure that the signs meet the requirements of PCS.

Thus far, we have selected the locations and tentative themes for five signs. Two will go at the main reserve entrances (Dungowan St in Hawker and Springvale Drive opposite De Salis St in Weetangera), a panorama-style sign will go on the Pinnacle summit, and there will be two trackside signs, one in the Stringybark Forest and the other at the dam. If funds allow, we may also add another trackside sign, which we are thinking of putting on the Pinnacle summit to supplement the panorama sign. We have decided that the main content for the two entrance signs will consist of a welcome to the reserve, including a component in Ngunawal language (to be contributed by Ngunawal elder Wally Bell), a map of the reserve showing recommended walks, and short descriptions of the walks. All the signs will include QR codes linking people to additional information on our website or other relevant websites. Alana and Anne have done some excellent work in choosing, describing and ground-truthing the recommended walks from both entrances, and I have contributed a tentative design for the entrance signs and one two of the trackside signs.

On December 22nd, the working group met with Claire Conti, Visitor Information Manager for PCS, who will be working with us to ensure that the signs meet the PCS requirements for interpretive signage on CNP reserves.

There is still a great deal to do, but the working group has made great progress towards achieving our goals. In the coming months, Suzanne will pull together the content we have produced into a design that reflects the existing design themes used in fotpin artwork, as well as clearly distinguishing our signage from the PCS signage used on the reserve. Once our designs are complete, we will approach the manufacturer/installer for a quote, at which point we will be able to make a final decision on how many signs we can afford. Our target is to complete the design work in time for sign installation by the end of the current financial year.

### **Molonglo Watermain Revegetation**

The results of the trial seeding of the Icon water tanks compound in early September last year (see [Update #41](#)) have been less than overwhelming, I think it is true to say.

John Fitz Gerald and I have inspected the site and concluded that perhaps another revegetation strategy might be a better use of the funding we have been given. John and I will continue to explore other avenues and try to come to a consensus about how best to proceed.

## Weed Management

Weeds have been enjoying the last three seasons of above average rainfall and have absorbed all the time we've been able to put into them (nearly 800 hours so far since last July). St John's Wort has been our priority target and we have spent more than 200 hours spraying it, concentrating on areas of the reserve with the greatest diversity of native ground-layer species. Unfortunately we do not have the resources to manage it over the entire reserve, so some areas have been left to their own devices. Fortunately our PCS ranger was able to obtain funding from the Environmental Offsets program for contract spraying of St John's Wort in parts of Kama Link Paddock (and nearby "buffer strips" in the reserve) that we were unable to treat.

Another concern this season has been an explosion in blackberry numbers. We reduced numbers on the reserve considerably until there were only 8 small plants identified in 2019-2020, but this has blown out to more than 200 this season. They are particularly bad in Kama Link (>100), no doubt because its proximity to William Hovell Drive along which they have been rampant and untreated by the government for many years.

In contrast, the annual number of Sweet briars detected on the reserve, which we reduced by 90% between 2012 and 2022, has only increased marginally since 2019-20. This is attributed partly to the virtual elimination of mature, fruiting plants on the reserve as well as having been able to control them in external buffer strips along most of the reserve boundary.

Long-standing members will remember the huge extent of infestation of the reserve with Saffron thistles after the breaking of the "noughties" drought. After several years of control effort, they were finally reduced to a "background" level and have required hardly any effort this season. Unfortunately though other thistles, which we did have under control for a few years, have become a major focus again this season.

Other weeds have received some effort but not nearly that required to bring our weed control back to pre-2020 levels. More detail can be found in the [summary of weed control effort up to March 31](#).

## Weetangera Primary School Fete – December 4

After having to cancel their annual fete for the last few years due to COVID, Weetangera Primary were finally able to hold the event this year, and it was a great success. The fotpin stall was kept busy throughout with a number of people signing up to join the fotpin contact list. Many thanks to everyone who helped out, particularly Mike and Denise who stepped in to do the setup.

## Upcoming Events

- **Autumn bird walk:** Sunday May April 30<sup>th</sup>, 9.00 am at Dungowan St, Hawker  
The Summer migrants are starting to leave, and the winter migrants are already returning to the reserve. This walk is timed to hopefully catch some of both sets of migrants as well as the honeyeaters as they begin their annual trek out to the coast and the northwards to warmer climes. Join me to see what we can spot in a few hours of gentle strolling through the reserve's beautiful woodlands. (Unfortunately, this walk is already full, so if you have not already contacted me, it's too late! Sorry.)
- **Fotpin AGM:** Sunday May 21st, Hawker Primary School, 2 pm.  
Further details to be circulated soon.

John Brannan  
Convenor

26 April 2023