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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – May 2020*

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Hello everyone and welcome to this months' newsletter. A lot has changed over the last month.

Last month we had an invigorating activity clearing the Muttonwood track and there were possible problems on the horizon coming from China. Movement and meeting with others was unrestricted.

In the week after the activity, changes to our society started. Firstly there were restrictions on international travel and many warnings about washing your hands (while singing Happy Birthday) and coughing into your elbow. Next came social distancing. It is a worry that social distancing has been often referred to when it physical distancing that people have be doing. Soon after that some aspects of our society were shut down. Each day there were new restrictions on movement or public gatherings.

Then a range of businesses were required to close and many people found themselves unemployed or under employed. A jobseeker allowance was to help keep people employed and businesses open. There was a rush on toilet paper, strange since this was not related to any Corona Virus symptoms. Travel overseas is banned and most interstate travel is banned too. Petrol is now cheaper than milk.

A more comprehensive list of the Covid19 restrictions are listed on the last two pages of the newsletter. This information has come from the Australian and Victorian Governments' websites.

Playgrounds are closed and schools moved learning remotely from home. The National Park fortunately remains open.

Parks staff have added danger tape to the tables the picnic areas in each carpark to discourage people from using the tables and barbeque. After waiting so long to get the barbeque working, now people cannot use it again. The picnic tables at Billy's Weir remain unchanged. If people walk that far they could still gather.



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Over the last month, Matt and Craig were able to get some signs up around the Stringybark Ridge Track, especially where signs and directional markers were burnt by the bushfire. This will hopefully help walkers from losing their way around this track. I came across a group of walkers who were walking Stringybark in reverse to normal. They asked where the swing bridge was and were not surprised when told that it is in another National Park (Tarra-Bulga). This will provide them with another opportunity to walk.



With outside groupings limited to two people, our planned April activity of a barbeque, spot light walk and moth survey needed to be cancelled. The current Victorian State of Emergency finishes on May 11 so it is also unlikely the next activity (17/5/2020) will be able to run.



The signage for the beginning of the Fosters Gully Track is still to be fixed. It remains on the ground near the start of the walk.

With many people gaining much more spare time, there has been many walkers in the park. There have been cars regularly in each car park.

I walked Billy's Creek Track and found three trees down across the track. Ranger Gabrielle was able to get somebody out to remove these trees the next day and that person was also able to slash the main tracks.

I walked to the Stringybark and Muttonwood Tracks to see the areas that were burnt in the bushfire. The bush is growing back well. Some of tracks in this area will require work and one area of concern will be on Muttonwood Track where the old bridge (below the dam washout) has burnt away and handrail is now across the crossing. A new bridge will need to be constructed if this track is to be used. If we have no activity next month, I will feature photos of the bushfire regrowth.

After a few week of staying home and only leaving for essential travel, it is very easy to become static. Going for walks (exercise – one reason you can leave the home) in the Park is one way to break the routine. When walking at the end of Muttonwood Track I saw three deer cross the track.

### **May Activity (if Stage 3 restrictions change)**

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 10.00pm

The group will meet in the Junction Road car park to complete track maintenance and weeding. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions

## Australian Government Department of Health restrictions

Whenever you are out of the home, always practice good physical distancing and hand hygiene.

The following facilities were restricted from opening:

- pubs, registered and licensed clubs (excluding bottle shops attached to these venues), hotels (excluding accommodation)
- gyms and indoor sporting venues
- cinemas, entertainment venues, casinos and night clubs
- restaurants and cafes will be restricted to takeaway and/or home delivery
- food courts (except for take away)
- auction houses, real estate auctions and open houses
- personal services (beauty, nail, tanning, waxing and tattoo salons)
- spa and massage parlours, excluding health related services such as physiotherapy
- amusement parks, arcades and play centres (indoor and outdoor)
- strip clubs, brothels and sex on premises venues
- galleries, national institutions, historic sites and museums
- health clubs, fitness centres, yoga, barre and spin facilities, saunas, bathhouses and wellness centres and swimming pools
- community facilities such as community halls, libraries and youth centres, RSL and PCYC
- gaming and gambling venues
- Indoor and outdoor markets (excluding food markets). States and territories will make their own announcements about this.

This is especially important for people over the age of 70, those over 65 years who have existing health concerns and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the aged of 50 who have existing health concerns. These groups should limit the contact with others as much as possible when away from home.

There are restrictions to protect older Australians living in residential aged care facilities.

Churches and other places of worship, will be considered places of work so services can be streamed to the community. This will ensure that religious services, including Easter services, remain accessible to congregations. Services may be conducted and streamed providing only essential staff are present, the venue/facility remains closed to the public and social distancing principles are adhered to — 1 person per 4 square metres.

Weddings can be conducted with no more than 5 people, including the couple, the celebrant and the witnesses. Funerals must be limited to no more than 10 people. The 4 square metre rule and social distancing must be observed.

## Victorian Stage 3 restrictions

The State of Emergency declared last month has been extended until midnight 11 May 2020 to continue the measures designed to 'flatten the curve' of coronavirus and give our health system the best chance of managing the virus.

All travellers returning from overseas to Victoria will be placed in enforced quarantine for a self-isolation period of 14-days.

Gatherings are now restricted to no more than 2 people except for members of your immediate household and for work or education.

Under the Stage 3 restrictions, the new directions mean that what was previously advice about staying home is now enforceable.

Playgrounds, skate parks and outdoor gyms are now closed.

If people breach these directions, they face on-the-spot fines of \$1,652 for individuals and \$9,913 for businesses. Larger fines can also be issued through the courts.

This means persons or businesses could be fined on the spot:

- If they fail to self-isolate for 14 days after arriving at an airport in Victoria from a flight originating from overseas, as set out in the Airport Arrivals Direction.
- If they organise or attend a mass gathering prohibited by the Prohibited Gatherings Direction.
- If they organise or attend a wedding that has present more than the two persons being married, the celebrant, and two witnesses, or a funeral that has more than 10 persons, as prohibited by the Prohibited Gatherings Direction. The 4 square metre rule and social distancing must be observed.

We're also telling Victorians – there are only 4 reasons to be out:

- shopping for what you need - food and essential supplies
- medical, care or compassionate needs
- exercise in compliance with the public gathering requirements
- work and study if you can't work or learn remotely

As we deal with this health crisis, we know that for many Victorians it's an economic crisis as well.

A moratorium on evictions will be introduced for the next 6 months for residential and commercial tenants who are experiencing financial distress due to the impact of coronavirus. This will apply across all states and territories.