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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – August 2020

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter.

Normally at the beginning of August each year we will have our Annual General Meeting. Current gathering rules do not allow us to run an open meeting where all possible members could attend. We will delay our AGM until we can safely meet together. Current position holders will continue in their current positions until re-election can happen at the AGM.

Corona Virus (Covid 19) has not gone away and has especially been a problem in metropolitan Melbourne where a second wave of the virus has been infecting many more. Select postcodes with higher infection rates moved to stage three restrictions and then nine high rise towers were locked down and all residents tested. Melbourne Metro has re-entered Stage 3 restrictions for a period of at least six weeks. Daily 300-500 new cases are being located. Country Victoria has had less cases and has remained at Stage 2 restrictions. Latrobe City has four active cases.

Since restrictions have not changed on our area we were able to run our planned activity. Worldwide over 16 million have contracted the Corona Virus and over 645,000 have died. In Australia, over 14,000 have contracted the corona virus and most new cases are occurring in Victoria. The US has fared the worst with over 4.3 million cases and over 149,000 deaths.

July Activity Report

At this month's activity we had Ken, Beryl, Mike, Cathy, Graeme, Matt, Joelle, Tamara, Wayne, Gordon and Darren. The group met in the car park and went through the JSA for the day's activity. The Covid 19 directions from Parks was also gone through.

Over the last few weeks the Strzelecki Bush Walking Club have been into the Park to complete two different walks. Matt had put the motion detection cameras in an area where we hoped to find a bandicoot. Possible bandicoot tracks were found but sadly no bandicoots were sighted on the cameras. So we remain with no positive sightings of bandicoots in the park. Hopefully this will change.

The day's activity was to complete the winter nesting box survey. The group decided to change it up and deal with the boxes in the reverse order to what we normally dealt with them. This meant that we could walk to the end and work back towards the car park where there is a seat and table to have lunch at. Ken and Matt drove their vehicles in via the Baniff's Road entrance while the rest got to warm up with a

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morning walk. Just inside the first gate there was a hole in the track in the middle of the first culvert. Graeme returned home to get some tools, metal and crushed rock to repair this hole. He worked throughout the morning to repair this dangerous hole. It is a temporary fix, now secured, that will need the whole culvert replaced.

At the nesting boxes we got to use the new camera. We had the additional challenge of having to use older copies of the location maps. Some of the recently added boxes and replacement boxes were not recorded on the older maps. This highlighted that we will need to update our nesting box maps and use the GPS to reconfirm each box's location. Some boxes have been lost.



In the middle of the session we had problems with the camera and putting new AA batteries did not solve the problem. Matt later found that the camera has an internal battery to operate the camera and the additional AA batteries are only for the light. The internal battery should last for up to five hours if charged before an activity. Something to remember for next time the camera is used. Matt also found that the sound was not on (making it difficult to match recordings to boxes), so this will also need to be checked for next time.

Over the day it was found that a number of boxes need to be reattached to trees while some others need repairs. Hand sanitizer and wipes were used when the equipment was transferred to a new person. Over the day 38 sugar gliders and 1 ringtail possum were found in the boxes.

Graeme since he was working at the main gate was able to see a number of family groups out enjoying the sunny winter day. Two groups as they exited commented that the park looks great and you're doing a great job keeping it tidy.

The group all moved back to the car park for a late lunch. After lunch we were able to go home, before the storms came through that night.

August Activity (If we are allowed to have an activity)

Sunday 16th August 10.00pm

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