



ORAPARINNA TELEGRAPH

Official Bulletin of Friends of Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park

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CONGRATULATIONS

Students from Hawker Area School will be enjoying exciting new learning opportunities in Term 2 and 3.

This has been made possible because we received the inaugural Colin Malcolm Education Scholarship Award for 2017 from Friends of Parks Inc. Board.

Colin was a long serving member of Friends of Onkaparinga Parks and the Board has recognised his outstanding contribution in this progressive way.

Our President and Hawker Area School staff member Mphilis Manombe will attend the FOP Inc. AGM on May 1 when the cheque for \$2,500 will be presented to the school.

MARCH MEETING

Autumn weather can be unpredictable in the Flinders Ranges. The team which went to the park for a week in March was confronted by hot days and warm nights which meant a program change.

Reports of contaminated water in the tank at Guide Hut was given high priority. We went to the hut expecting little rain water and plenty of the unpleasant odour which follows multiple bee deaths inside a water tank. Draining, flushing and refilling the tank were our intended tasks but nature had rectified the problem. Whoever had reported the problem was correct, bees had invaded the tank. But 71.5 mm of rain recorded at the hut in January was enough to both flush the dead bees out and flush the tank, then leave it full of crystal clear rain water, and no odour.

Other tasks spread over the week included checking site numbers at campgrounds, clearing campground fire pits, attacking a few dozen cactus plants we stumbled upon, fixing a galvanised roof to Aroona well 3 cover, and removing fallen timber from Aroona well 2.

And we managed to stay cool.

MAY MEETING

With Easter and school holidays over there are sure to be jobs to be done in campgrounds. Those we know of are installing site numbers where they are missing, and straightening a few timber bollards.

Work started at Aroona well 2 in March will be continued. Once all fallen timber has been removed the area will be levelled ready for installation of a safety cover.

Hot weather prevented oiling of camp tables and seats last month so that will probably happen in May.

There are tree guards at Dingley Dell and Acraman to be removed and if time allows, cactus to be removed from Oraparinna creek south of Brachina Gorge turnoff.

Let Secretary Helen know if you plan to attend in May and if you need a room. Dates for our May meeting are – 11th to 17th.

NB – Mice were active at Ora. In March. In case there are more of them in May you may want to bring your preferred mouse chaser to use in your room.

CAMPSITE BOOKING

The date from which camp sites in I-FRNP are to be pre-booked on-line has been brought forward one month. On-line bookings will start on June 1, 2017. Even though we have a Unique Number for accessing camp sites we are still required to book on-line before arriving at the site. The Unique Number simply negates the need for payment. Check that the number of the vehicle you will use when camping is current. Park staff will have daily printouts detailing pre-bookings. Unique number, member's name and member's vehicle registration need to match the printout. While that may not be essential in

the Flinders where we are known, it could be embarrassing in the parks where we are just another visitor and something does not match. We can book our preferred camp site up to 12 months in advance of using it.

VISITORS APP.

Bob continues beavering away at development of the app. Those who have offered to assist can expect Bob to call on them soon. If you have not yet told Bob of your willingness to help on some aspect of getting the app. together, it is not too late. He will appreciate your call. While on apps, have you looked at "Atlas of Living Australia?" This magnificent app. seeks to cover the flora and fauna of our nation. Information is provided by Australia's academic, scientific, and environmental communities. It is currently being upgraded so downloads are not available.

However the website has the information and will advise when app. downloads are available.

FLINDERS RANGES EXHIBITION

Last month's OT provided details of an exhibition being held at the State Library of SA on North Terrace.

"Unsettled: Colonial ruin in the Flinders Ranges" includes photos and early reminiscences of people and places.

It is on display until May 14.

Patron Victor Gostin recently visited the exhibition and was thrilled by the wonderful display of the Range's history. Victor says it is a 'must see for all of us'. We plan to go along in the first week of May. See you there?

VALE PETER VENHOEK

Peter passed away in the afternoon of Friday April 7, 2017. A member of our Friends group for 20 years, Peter was a keen supporter of many major projects. The group enabled him to combine two of his greatest enjoyments, being with friends, and being in the Flinders Ranges.

When he found he was unable to participate in physical activities, Peter devoted his time to photographing our members and their work. These photos will be valuable in our history files.

Peter will be remembered as a cheerful

member who loved to tell stories and enjoy a laugh.

The thoughts and prayers of Friends members are with Margo at this sad time.

BIRDS OF I-FRNP

At least 103 species of birds have been recorded in our park. Among them are two notables, both for their size and frequency.

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLES – The Wedge-tailed Eagle is Australia's largest bird of prey. In appearance, behaviour and breeding, it resembles the Golden Eagle of the Northern hemisphere. Wedge-tails are often seen soaring at great height on rising air currents called thermals. Eagles form permanent bonds. They share a home range of several square kilometres. Spectacular acrobatic displays are sometimes seen in winter, when pairs lock talons and tumble through the air, calling as they fall. Platforms of sticks, nests may measure two and a half meters across. Nests are sanitised daily with fresh eucalyptus boughs. Generally only one chick is raised, the stronger of two killing its sibling. Wedge-tailed Eagles may not breed during droughts. Hunters of rabbits and small kangaroos, eagles also feed on carrion. Drivers should reduce speed when approaching an eagle near a road-kill.

EMU – The Emu is a nomadic wanderer ranging across much of the continent. Emus are omnivores – they eat most things, including grasses, leaves, fruits, flowers, seeds, insects. When it comes to raising families emus do things differently to most. After laying a clutch of approximately ten eggs, the female moves on, leaving the male to incubate, brood and rear the young birds. The male lowers its metabolic rate and incubates for 53 days, rarely moving off the nest. Living on stored body fat, a male may lose up to eight kilograms while incubating eggs. Once hatched, the small distinctively striped chicks shelter beneath the male's feathers at night. Dad does it tough in inland areas where males may remain with young birds for eighteen months. A male with young should not be approached. Larger clutch sizes have been observed in recent years, a result of fox and cat control programs in the park.