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SUMMER 2026

# Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a  
healthier environment

Address: PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442



*At work and play!*



# *Into our 22nd year. . .*

Happy New Year to all our members, please stay safe in what promises to be a hot and dangerous summer. Landcare celebrates its 40th year, and N&DLG its 22nd since starting in 2004.

Our Christmas Party on 16 December was its usual success with the BBQ and marvellous spread of salads and desserts from you.

Andy Sayers and Emrys Nekvapil won the Egg Toss. The trophy and merit award for the Gumboot Toss went to Paul Carter.

The heavens opened straight after the toss with dramatically different rain measurements locally. Bruce Hedge has some weather observations on the year in this issue, followed by a tribute to our CFAs.

Two important events held late last year are also written up, Professor Barry Golding on the 'unsettling legacies' of local mountain peaks, and Dr Angela Foley on thinking about country as cultural and physical landscapes. We continue to support local schools with the Junior Landcare facilitators – primary school children's articles follow.

The front cover photos are of the Xmas party, plus hard work being done at Wesley Park.

Jane Trikojus has set up Friends of Wesley Park to help manage the weeds and think about its future.

The Weedies have continued looking after roadsides, sustained by morning teas. Sheltons Road had its usual glorious display of Spring wildflowers.



## Group contacts

### Committee for 2025–26

**President:** Karl Kny, [karl@kolora.com](mailto:karl@kolora.com), 0409 543 061

**Treasurer:** Howard Stirling, [howardjanine01@gmail.com](mailto:howardjanine01@gmail.com), 0432 809 314.

**Ordinary members:**

Paul Carter, [millhouse@aussiebroadband.com.au](mailto:millhouse@aussiebroadband.com.au), 0477 271 199. Currently unavailable.

Bruce Hedge, [bruceahedge@gmail.com](mailto:bruceahedge@gmail.com), 0427 888 122 (rainfall).

Helen Scott, [orseda@outlook.com](mailto:orseda@outlook.com), 0412 582 526 (website).

Jess Szigethy-Gyula, [jess.szigethy@gmail.com](mailto:jess.szigethy@gmail.com), 0408 678 355.

Jane Trikojus, [trikojus\\_j@fastmail.com](mailto:trikojus_j@fastmail.com), 0413 499 252 (Wesley Park and Jim Road).

**Other Contacts**

**Roadside Management Group (the Weedies):** Sue Massie, 0407 029 392.

**Anderson Road Triangle:** Karen Hunt 0408 135 243.

**Spray trailer and cameras:** Howard Stirling, 0432 809 314.

**Website:** <https://newhamlandcare.info>

The committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month (February to November) between 7.30–9pm at the Newham Hall. All members are welcome to attend, be become more involved or raise specific matters. If you do wish to attend, please advise a committee member.

Any articles you wish to submit to the newsletter, or even suggestions for articles, please email our interim editors Helen Scott [orseda@outlook.com](mailto:orseda@outlook.com) or Brigitte Kny at [bkny@bigpond.com](mailto:bkny@bigpond.com)



The members of Newham Landcare thank our local volunteer Newham CFA brigade for not only assisting in Strike Teams in Chintin's grass fire (near Romsey) as well as the Ravenswood/Harcourt and the Longwood fires – but also for protecting our immediate neighbourhood.

The Newham area and the Macedon Ranges could have been in dire straits if not for our Newham volunteers plus neighbouring brigades, Forest Fire Management and air support turning out early morning around 7am on Friday 9 January to several fires in challenging grounds in the Cobaw Ranges. Those fires were caused by lightning strikes the night before.

Please make sure you know all the risks to you and your family this fire season. The CFA has resources on their website to help you prepare:

<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare>

***Remember: the safest option is to leave early***



# Bruce's 2025 Rainfall report

2025 rainfall was quite fickle across the Newham and District Catchment area. Lovely word 'fickle'. Perhaps 'variable' is more apt, but it doesn't sound as good, eh?? Broadly, it was about average across the region, but that average has dropped by about 50 to 100mm over the last forty years we've been here. Official BOM recorder for Woodend, Peter Yates, reported 725 mm for the year; Ian Temby at Ashbourne had 635mm, and Bruce Hedge at Newham/Cobaw trailed the field at only 596mm. I'll call it fickle. Ha ha ha. Monthly figures here at Newham/Cobaw – roughly corresponding to seasons were as follows: January-March were 30,12, and 33mm respectively. April to June figures were 19, 6 and 78mm respectively. A dry start to the year, and a late Autumn Break. July to September got a bit wetter; 123, 77, and 30mm. October to December's were 54, 90, and 42mm. All rounded down to make it easier.

The various rain event differences came to a head the day of the N&DLG end of year picnic on 16 December. Thunderstorms were forecast, and the evening started well, with warm temperatures for the egg throw, but as the gumboot toss wound down, the dark western sky, threatened ominously. A check of the BOM radar confirmed a narrow band of thunderstorms coming straight toward us at Wesley Park in Newham. As a couple of dozen of us sheltered in the pavilion, it bucketed down, and I gestimated at least 20mm fell in 15 minutes. Lovely, welcome rain, thought I! Arriving home 4km North, I was slightly perplexed to empty only 4.6mm for the event! Peter's Woodend figure was 25mm, but Karl on Monument Creek caught the edge and had 12mm. The Scotts on the north face of Mount Macedon had their driveway severely washed away, after 28mm fell very quickly. Ouch! At least we're going into the Fire Season with full rainwater tanks, but a rapidly dropping dam, due to no major run-off through the year, and losing 2cm a day to evaporation on 35 degree days.

BOM's February to April outlook reports *'For much of eastern and central Australia, there are roughly equal chances of above or below average rainfall for the three months. This means there are a range of possible outcomes, including above, below or near-average rainfall.'* Talk about having a bob each way!!! Well, here's to a mild, damp season with few

Fire Danger days, and may your tomatoes be bountiful.

## POSTSCRIPT

So much for Fire Danger optimism. An appalling time started on 9 January with out of control grass fires starting near Longwood, closing the Hume Hwy and spreading to engulf areas all around. Then dry lighting was responsible for outbreaks all over the State; closest to home are the dreadful losses at Harcourt and surrounds.

We all mourn for people who die, those who lose everything and the flora and fauna impacted. What a huge debt of gratitude we owe to our firefighters and emergency responders. Stay safe and vigilant everyone, and make sure you have the Emergency App. functional on your mobile. Country is drying rapidly and bush fires will be a huge risk this summer.

## Upper Maribyrnong Landscape and Deep Creek Biolink

This biolink project is a collaborative initiative between Biolinks Alliance, Melbourne Water, the Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network (UDCLN), and Macedon Ranges Shire Council (MRSC). Its aim is to engage landholders within the target area to undertake in on-ground restoration activities that will contribute to an increase in native wildlife habitat.

**They are looking for landholders in the Upper Deep Creek restoration area to get involved in this biolink restoration.**

Biolinks Alliance are delivering the project and have started conducting ecological assessments on eligible properties within the catchment.

To learn more and register your interest to get involved, visit their website - <https://biolinksalliance.org.au/deep-creek-biolink>

Watch the webinar recording, <https://www.landcarer.com.au/2025-national-landcare-conference-resources>



You might recall that Karl and I are part of the “Birds on Farms” program since 8 years, where every 4 months we traipse across our place with a “twitcher” from Birdlife Australia – armed with binoculars and camera hanging around our necks plus notebook, pencil and print-outs to help us identify all the LBB’s (Little Brown Birds like thornbills etc) flittering all over the place. Over those years we have recorded over 100 different bird species here.

Well – it looks like those times might be getting a lot easier. In consultation with Biolinks Alliance we are currently trialling on behalf of all Newham Landcare members this amazing new gadget: the *Song Meter Micro 2* recorder.

It’s a tiny little thing with a strap to hang onto a tree. You insert 4 AA batteries in, put it out into the field and then let this gizmo “do its thing” – which is to listen and record. For 5 days till the batteries run out. You even have a snazzy app.

And then you take the little unit to your computer,

download umpteen mega-thingys onto your desktop to be downloaded, sorted and analysed in Germany!!! For FIVE HOURS – in Germany – yes really.

The very first time we trialled the Song Meter Micro 2 we only lasted 3 days before curiosity took over and we... well sort of tried to make sense of all the techno stuff. Luckily our son was here to help with algorithms, data structure, pivot and lookup tables, logistic script and heuristic solutions. I mentally tuned out once they mentioned “*analysing 35,000 rows of data on an Excel spreadsheet!?!?!?*”.

Eventually they gave me a print-out that I could understand and the results were just amazing and confirmed lots of my previous observations. Stacks of birds I have spotted, heard and recorded in that location: Crested Shrike-tit, Eastern Yellow Robin, Mistletoe Bird, Sacred Kingfisher and many more.

I sat down and compared the Song Meter list to my observations – and spotted the recording of a Superb Lyrebird. A lyrebird here ??? I think the



closest lyrebird sighting to Newham is between Wallan and Pheasant Creek. Maybe the German AI mistook the neighbour's chainsaw and my phone pinging for a lyrebird.

So far we have surveyed 7 areas and Karl now has some of the finer points of this program sorted out – and I have lots of spread sheets. Not just birds in alphabetical order or sightings by time of day/night, no – he also sorts them by ‘guild’ i.e. species that use certain environments in similar ways; like waders, canopy foragers, frugivore, aerial insectivore etc etc. We apparently have 17 guilds.

Another spreadsheet is about “confidence and probability, certainly, likely, possible, unlikely and exclude”.

It is a lot of fun going thru the ‘probability’ sheet and compare the “likely” and even the “possible” with our various bird books and their listed habitat. I am determined to eventually have photographic evidence.

Stay tuned. Once we have sorted out how to best to use the Song Meter Micro 2 – this snazzy new

age apparatus will be available to Newham members to see what “Little Brown Birds” you have attracted to your plantings. And don’t forget to check the undergrowth for a possible Superb Lyrebird sighting.

Kolora Garden Hut Creek 2025.12.07		
Species	Abundance	No of Species
Aerial insectivore	8	1
Bark forager	8426	4
Canopy forager	13431	12
Carnivore	5632	14
Damp ground insectivores	998	5
Frugivore	20	2
Litter forager	466	8
Nectarivores	2387	19
Nocturnal predator	227	5
Open ground	57	4
Open trees	5232	18
Seeds close to ground	915	11
Seeds etc. from trees	385	3
Tall shrubs	10322	7
Wader	13	5
Waterbirds	360	7
Wetland	4	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>48883</b>	<b>127</b>

Above: Guilds at Garden Hut Creek.

Kolora Waterhole 2025.12.31						
Probability by Species: C= Certainly in the area, L = likely, P = Possible, U = Unlikely, X = Exclude						
		Confidence				
Species	Count	Average	Maximum	Guilds	Prob	
Striated Pardalote	3656	0.74	1.00	Canopy forager	C	
Australian Magpie	2972	0.61	1.00	Open ground	C	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	1160	0.47	0.98	Nectarivores	C	
White-throated Treecreeper	1076	0.51	0.99	Bark forager	C	
White-winged Chough	1037	0.56	1.00	Open trees	C	
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	961	0.65	1.00	Seeds close to ground	C	
Pied Butcherbird	772	0.38	0.90	Carnivore	C	
Southern Boobook	586	0.74	1.00	Carnivore	L	
Spotted Quail-thrush	580	0.40	0.95	Open trees	P	
Red Wattlebird	538	0.55	0.99	Nectarivores	C	
Spotted Pardalote	477	0.53	0.99	Canopy forager	C	
Rufous Whistler	386	0.41	0.97	Canopy forager	C	
Buff-rumped Thornbill	375	0.56	1.00	Open trees	C	
Gray Shrikethrush	339	0.49	0.99	Carnivore	C	
Black-faced Cuckooshrike	317	0.66	1.00	Canopy forager	L	
Laughing Kookaburra	301	0.66	1.00	Carnivore	C	
European Greenfinch	197	0.62	0.98	Seeds close to ground	P	
Galah	161	0.88	1.00	Seeds close to ground	C	
Superb Lyrebird	143	0.43	0.93	Damp ground insectivores	U	
Crimson Rosella	136	0.58	1.00	Seeds etc. from trees	C	
Little Raven	121	0.54	0.97	Carnivore	C	
Gray Fantail	112	0.62	0.97	Canopy forager	C	
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	94	0.62	0.99	Seeds etc. from trees	C	
Gray Currawong	79	0.64	1.00	Carnivore	C	
Australian Raven	64	0.39	0.90	Carnivore	C	
Pied Currawong	52	0.40	0.80	Carnivore	L	
Superb Fairywren	50	0.53	0.92	Open trees	C	
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	46	0.35	0.75	Tall shrubs	C	
Pallid Cuckoo	45	0.71	0.98	Open trees	C	

Left: Partial list of birds recorded near our little dam (spot the Superb Lyrebird).



*Around 20 Grade 4, 5 and 6 students from Heskett Primary school visited Kolora for a field day excursion to experience the biodiversity created by revegetating the landscape, as well as understanding the importance of Biolinks to help species survive. They also walked the creek and did some water quality sampling.*

We would like to say thank you Newham and District Landcare and Emma from Junior Landcare, for the experience that you gave to the grade 4, 5 and 6 students at Heskett. It was incredible to see all of the fascinating plants, birds and animals.

Thank you for allowing our school to go into Karl and Brigitte's property, it was such a blessing to see the wildlife at Kolora. Lots of students have been greatly inspired and some have even found new hobbies such as bird watching, bush walking and more.

We thank you for paying for our bus, which was a huge expense and greatly appreciated by us. We have learnt so much and hope we can meet with you in the future to learn even more. Thank you for teaching us cool stuff and we can't wait for next time!

*P.S. Thank you to Emma for teaching us how to identify birds by their calls and how they fly.*

**By Banjo, Harvey and Hudson.**

For 30 years Karl and Brigitte have been working on Kolora Farm to make it a safe and comfortable habitat for wildlife. They have done a fantastic job! The property is 150 acres of animal and plant heaven. Every tiny detail has been extensively planned, such as locations, bodies of water and the mixture of plants.

Just one area was home to 62 species of bird! You could tell how much Brigitte and Karl cared and the animals and property, it really helped make the experience so much more meaningful.

During the tour, Karl really stressed how important biolinks were to keep the property running smoothly. Biolinks are an area of trees or bushland that aid animals in moving around the landscape. They are often located near a body of water. I left the farm with a whole lot of new insight into how the environment works. It was an incredible experience!

**By Emily.**





*Candlebark Grade 1 class visited the revegetated property of Karl and Brigitte during their recent study of local creeks. They were greeted especially warmly by their dog Humphrey – the best stick fetcher ever!*

Brigitte and Karl shared information about the animals and plants of the property and the rescue animals they had looked after. They showed us photos of some of the nest boxes they'd installed and the creatures that used them, including the endangered Brush-tailed phascogale. Did you know the males only live for a year?

Karl also explained how biolinks are important for creatures to move along creeks safely. He showed examples of revegetated and degraded creeks that highlighted biolinks.

The walk went through wildflowers, including chocolate lilies, to explore the creek where some science activities were set up.

The children identified creek creatures and tested the water quality. Critters that were observed included dragonfly nymph, beetles, mosquito fish, and water snails.





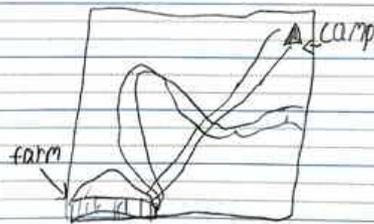
Candlebark Grade 1 class visit.

Wild ones  
 We went to the creek on camp, we met a dog called Humfrey he was a bit funny because when we were going to the creek we were following him and he was going around in circles so we were going around too. We met Humfrey at a hour before we went to our camp site ~~where~~.

Thank you for letting us for you, the farm and for you, the creek. It was so much fun we. Let it we even left some skipping stone ways.



The Wild ones creek  
 advencher The wild ones went to Karl and Brigittes creek in kolara. we did eksperiments about The creek. we sar hoy salty The water was, it was not That salty. we stoped at some bird nests. Then we played in The cubies. Then we to our kampst.



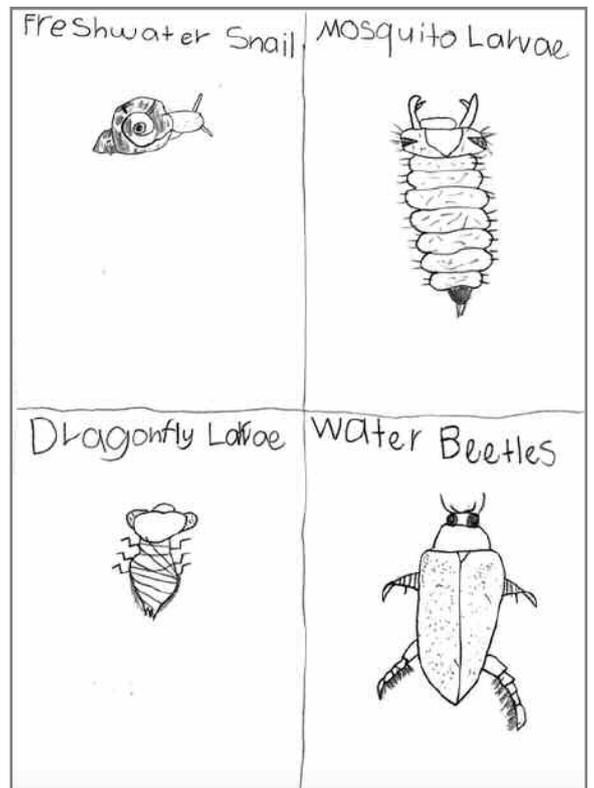
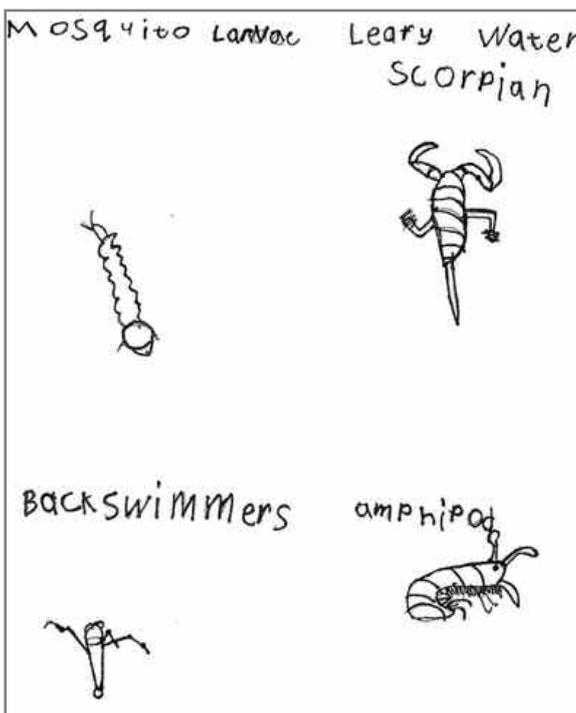
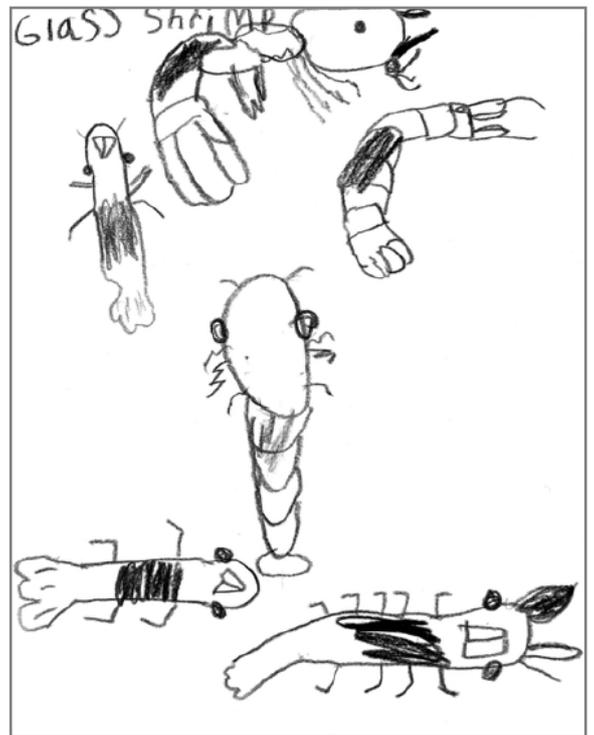
when we got to the cteek I threw Humfrey's stick and it Landid in the cteek then he jant into the cteek and cacht it we all Lurft a Lot and then he shact and he got us all wet from Margot.





Candlebark Grade 1 class visit.

the wild ones went  
thru the forest we saw  
Kangaroo Bones eaten by a  
fox I learnt at different  
parts of the creek the water  
can have different amounts  
of salt



## 2025 National Landcare Conference Video Recordings

You can now watch all the speaker presentation videos from the 2025 National Landcare Conference, and the 2025 National Landcare Awards event online. You can also access over 50 poster presentations that were on display at the conference. Accessing this content online means you can share the content with others in our landcare network and community.

Access the recordings and posters at <https://www.landcarer.com.au/2025-national-landcare-conference-resources>

# On Country Interculturally:

*Thinking about places as cultural as well as physical landscapes*

Dr Angela Foley presentation at Newham Hall

On Friday, 17 October, Dr Angela Foley shared her research and personal experiences about modern cultural landscapes. The talk was attended by members of the Newham and District Landcare Group, along with people from other local Landcare and community groups, including JCEN and the Macedon Ranges Truth and Reconciliation Group.

Dr Foley has spent many years working in education and community advocacy, mostly in universities, schools, and not-for-profit organisations. She has worked for over 20 years at the Merri Creek Management Committee, where she currently leads Biodiversity and Waterways Education programs under the “Caring for Country” banner. Through this work, she reaches a large number of people each year with creative and hands-on learning programs. In 2020, she completed her PhD titled *The Art of Place-Making in Wurundjeri Country Today*.

During her presentation, Angela explored what “cultural landscapes” mean in different social settings — from international agreements like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to community festivals, local place names, traditional objects such as digging sticks, and ecological systems based on Wurundjeri seasons. She also talked about why it’s important to use terms like “cultural landscape” and “Country,” and invited the audience to think about coexistence, misunderstanding and allyship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

A key part of her talk focused on allyship. Angela read out the names of various Traditional Custodians to make several points:

- To thank and recognise the specific people who have shared their knowledge and connection to Country.
- To show respect for audience members who might know those people personally.
- To show that an acknowledgment of Country can be personal and meaningful, not just something formal read out at an event.



Photo: Wurundjeri Elder Uncle David Wandin and Dr Angela Foley beside Birrarung, 14 December 2018.

- To highlight how naming people helps build genuine, local partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Angela described different settings or “cultural landscapes” along with nine Victorian language groups, including examples at international, national, state, and local levels. These ranged from the Uluru Statement from the Heart to local Landcare and restoration work, as well as festivals, place names, and traditional cultural practices like using Lomandra plants for weaving and making eel traps.

She also drew on examples from different places on Country to show the many ways people connect with land, such as through ceremony, habitat restoration, workshops, waterways, cultural revival activities (like making shields or digging sticks),

seasonal observations, and legal events like land handbacks.

Angela described Country using rich, sensory words such as *burnt, windy, rocky, prickly, starry, grassy, weedy, stony, quiet, watery, and still* — showing that landscapes are alive with both physical and spiritual meaning.

In closing, Angela asked everyone to think about what happens when we choose to describe places as “cultural landscapes” versus calling them “Country,” and how those choices shape our understanding and relationships.

*Dr. Angela Foley with Emma Stevens, Junior Landcare Facilitator. Emma did work with Angela and organised the event and wrote this article.*



## The Corvids – Ravens and Crows



Connecting Country has a lovely series called Bird of the Month – a partnership between Connecting Country and BirdLife Castlemaine District, written by Jane Rusden and Damian Kelly of BCD. August was on Corvids, October on the Grey Fantail, July on Weebills.

Australia has five species – Australian Raven, Little Raven, Forest Raven, Torresian Crow and Little Crow. They all look similar but can be identified by location. Locally we only have the Australian Raven and Little Raven, and the Little Raven is far more common. It can be seen in large groups out of breeding season. Calls of the two local species are quite different with the Australian Raven tending to be longer and more drawn out than the Little Raven. Only in 1967 was there consensus to separate the Little Raven (*Corvus mellori*) from the Australian Raven (*C. coronoides*) as a distinct species.

I reckon Ravens have a bad press: farmers don't like them pecking out eyes of caste sheep for example, but they perform an important scavenger role in cleaning up dead wildlife as well as eating a variety of agricultural insect pests as well as seeds. In many Aboriginal language groups, the raven is seen as a trickster or hero. They are smart and have been recorded using tools such as sticks to retrieve food such as larvae from logs or dropping items on hard surfaces to crack them open. They also store food in caches for later use and can remember the location for long periods.

Both parents build the nest, an untidy collection of sticks with a softer internal lining high up in large trees, and feed the young, but only the female does the incubation.

More at <https://connectingcountry.org.au/bird-of-the-month-the-corvids-ravens-and-crows/> and of course Wikipedia, Birds in Backyards etc

**Helen Scott**

# Barry Golding – Six Peaks speak

## *Unsettling legacies in Southern Dja Dja Wurrung Country*

Federation University Honorary Professor Barry Golding entertained a full house at the Newham Hall on 7 November talking about his book, recently published book in 2004: *Six Peaks Speak, Unsettling Legacies in Southern Dja Dja Wurrung Country*. He had accessed seldom-visited archives to uncover the stories of six volcanic peaks in Central Victoria which tower above the rich volcanic grasslands of Dja Dja Wurrung Country: Mt Kooroocheang (Gurutjnga), Mt Beckworth (Nyaninuk), Mt Greenock, Mt Tarrengower (Dharrang Gauwa), Mt Alexander (Lyanganuk), and Mt Franklin (Lalkambuk).

Professor Golding is a great raconteur, a geologist, a keen cyclist and, as a keen bush-walker, one of the inaugurators of the Great Dividing Trail, former President of Adult Learning Australia and Patron of the Australian Men's Shed Association since 2009. As a teenager living in Donald, he mapped oven mounds and is still peering over fences identifying mounds that are still visible. He now combines online mapping tools including LiDAR with historic geological maps to locate oven mounds clusters in the Kooroocheang, Ballan and other areas



*Aboriginal oven mound, Kooroocheang.*

Co-authored by Castlemaine geologist Clive Willman, the book tells the unique stories and continuing legacies of these mountains from a multidisciplinary perspective, turning the idea of “settling” on its head, instead using “unsettling” by European colonists as its fundamental organising principle. The peak-specific stories illustrate how many “taken for granted” aspects of mountains may not be as they seem. There are insights and evidence from diverse historical sources, including First Nations, geological, ecological, community, and reserve management.

Professor Golding explained his title: “I have used the term unsettling because that’s what happened. Australia was named, cultured and settled for perhaps 3,000 generations. It could only be settled once First Peoples were unsettled, often violently.”

He emphasised that the indignities in the unsettling process were not restricted to people. “The pines began to smother Mt Franklin in the late 1940s despite written promises from the Forests Commission that this would not happen,” he said. “Soon after, the Kooroocheang Swamp, which once hosted tiger cats and brologas, was drained. In the same era, extensive sand mining on Mt Beckworth was removing the best orchid habitat and gold dredges were still churning up the Loddon Valley around Newstead. The former Limestone Mineral Spring became ‘Mt Franklin’ after Coca Cola arguably destroyed the spring and made off with the now iconic brand name during the 1970s.

This site like most pre-contact First Nations sites and many post-contact sites is unrecorded on any heritage register. There are other priceless cultural landscapes, privately owned, largely unknown and poorly recorded, for example 30 Gurutjnga oven mounds.

Barry finished by saying “It’s time for Truth Telling”–

- Australia was settled, named and cultured by First Peoples for at least 3,000 generations.



- To call what occurred on contact everywhere in Australia as *settling* (*discovery/pioneering*) is dishonest.
- Settling was made possible by violent *unsettlement*.
- First People's resistance was met by deadly force.
- What occurred in Dja Dju Wurrung Country and on countless frontiers in Australia, including by the action of squatters, amounted to *genocide*.

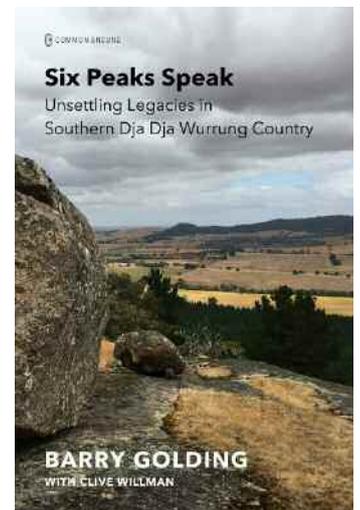
“Central Victoria has a rarely told ‘bottom up’ history which is ripe for the unwrapping and retelling. So much of what happened at and since unsettling contact in this landscape, goes right back to the rocks in Deep Time”... Understanding what is written in the landscape (and erased from it) is a prerequisite for responsible earth stewardship. What we need to do is listen.

Lots of questions and discussion followed, with a request that he do the same for Mt Macedon and Hanging Rock. People were able to purchase a soft cover version of *Six Peaks Speak* on the night. Thanks to Jane Trikojus for organising the event and to Sasha for technical management.

To find out more about Barry Golding you can see his blog at <https://barrygoanna.com/>, and read a review of the book by Prof. Bill Gammage at <https://ajal.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/AJAL-Apr-2025-BookReview.pdf>

I have a PowerPoint of his presentation to us with lots of maps and photos but it is 216mb, too big for the website. Contact me if you want a copy vis WeTransfer or Dropbox.

**Helen Scott**



# Invasive weed alert

Both Macedon Ranges and Mitchell Shires have released posters on this invasive new weed, the more complete Mitchell one follows.

When you dig out the weed with its tubers (remember, it is the one with brown tips at this time of year – not all green.)

- Dig out carefully being sure to get all tubers, place in a plastic bag and seal, leave in sun to sweat and then put in the red bin for landfill (per MRSC advice).
- Alternatively microwave plants in a sealed plastic bag – 5 minutes if just one specimen but increase time if you have more tubers. (use how long potato would take to cook as a guide) then put in a sealed plastic bag with plant material into the red bin for landfill.

## South African Weed-orchid (*Disa bracteata*)

### Description:

Robust, erect, bright green, fleshy perennial herb, 20cm – 40cm tall when mature. Produces new, underground tubers each year as it grows, from which annual above-ground growth forms in early Spring. Plant emerges as a rosette of multiple narrow, green, pointed leaves (around 6-10 leaves, each leaf around 3-15cm long and 1-1.5cm wide). Leaves often with purple undersides, sometimes only at the base of the leaf. Tubers look like a small potato (up to about 20cm in size), and will usually be accompanied by a mass of fleshy roots. Tubers develop a single, thick, cylindrical spike with tiny flowers (up to 0.5cm in size), with around 20 - 60 flowers. Flower colour is greenish-yellow with reddish-purple to brown tips, giving the flower spike a resemblance to an asparagus spear. Leaves can be present along the flower spike. It is easiest to identify once the plant starts developing its robust flower spike. Prior to this stage, the plant can look much like native species of Triggerplant (*Stylidium* spp.), which also have purple backed leaves. Flowering season is mainly from Oct – Dec in Victoria. Flowers die back to produce a brown capsule, containing vast quantities of dust like seeds, which are spread by the wind, but can be spread by shoes, clothing and vehicles.



Photo 1- African Weed Orchid, taken by Mel Stagg

Similar in appearance to some native species of orchid, such as Onion-orchids (*Microtis* spp.) or Leek-orchids (*Prasophyllum* spp.), however, these orchids only have a single leaf emerging at the base of the stem. The South African Weed Orchid has multiple.



### Tips:

Plants in the leafy, vegetative stage (before flowers fully develop and open) are susceptible to herbicides, which during the growing phase (while flower spike is developing) also kills the tubers.

Once plant has flowered, the only effectively treatment is manual removal. For manual removal, it is necessary dig out whole plant, including all tubers. Small tubers can exist to quite some depth below soil surface. Ensure to dig down until all are removed. Try to minimise soil disturbance around the plant. Removal is necessary prior to the plant going to seed (at the end of flowering), to prevent further spread. Once removed, all plant material should be securely bagged in a watertight bag and disposed of appropriately (into landfill, not into green waste or compost). Seeds continue to mature even if the flower head is picked.

Photo 2 - African Weed Orchid, pre flowering, taken by Ralph Foster INaturalist Australia



This plant was carefully dug out with a large flat head screwdriver.

Care was taken to ensure last seasons bulb was also removed (image below).



*Photo 3 and 4 – African Weed Orchid, taken by Viviana Halley*

**Habit:**

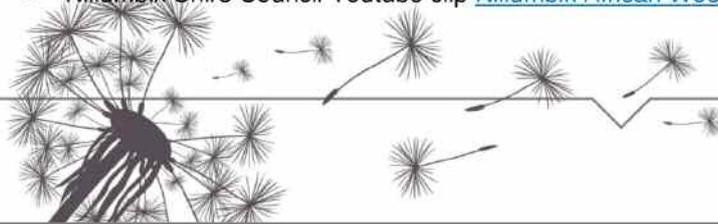
South African Weed-orchid grows well amongst native grasslands and grassy woodlands. Often found amongst other native orchids.

**Classification:**

Considered an environmental weed (not classified under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act , 1994*)

**Further Information:**

- Agriculture Victoria Invasive and Impact Assessment [South African weed orchid \(Disa bracteata\) | VRO | Agriculture Victoria](#)
- Euroa Arboretum Youtube clip [Weeds – Euroa Arboretum](#)
- Nillumbik Shire Council Youtube clip [Nillumbik African Weed Orchid](#)



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