

FOBIF since 1998

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Readers of our website might have noticed the number of times we've repeated ourselves. In our defence, we could cite Marx's dictum, 'History doesn't repeat itself, it stutters.'

So, any account of the Friends' activities over the last 25 years will involve a list of repeated actions, all pursued in the possibly naïve belief that they'll bring results. Below is a part of the story, crudely summarised. Dozens of FOBIF members have pulled off these activities. We won't name them: they know who they are!

We've made dozens of submissions to local forest managers on fire, track management and weeds. And we've had many onsite meetings with managers to discuss management issues.

We've mounted an argument with heritage and tourism experts on the need for gold to be demoted from its present pre-eminence in our history, and for Indigenous culture and natural history be given their proper place in our common culture.

We've badgered local authorities to pay attention to environmental constraints in planning matters; and to look with care at weed outbreaks in our towns and forests.

We've hammered the idea that 'natural' disasters are sometimes caused by lack of respect for nature: in particular by building settlements in flood and fire danger zones.

FOBIF representatives played a key role in getting the route of the Calder Freeway altered to avoid important bushland at Taradale.

We've run a weekly news blog for over ten years, covering local environmental issues in their state and national context.

We've run art and photography exhibitions celebrating the values of our native bushlands, some under the heading, Mamunya: 'wait a while, don't touch it, growing up'.

We've published one local history, one on our organisation and four natural history guides in the belief that improving knowledge of the local scene will increase community respect for it. They've sold 13,000 copies and counting.

We played an important role in the setting up of Connecting Country, with a grand vision of restoring landscapes across the region. In addition we've run small landscape restoration programs of our own, including clearing Bridal Creeper from landscape restoration programs of our own, including clearing Bridal Creeper from the grand old Chewton Yellow Box.

We've run approximately 200 walks into almost every corner of our region!

Have we solved any of the great problems? Ah, no: but we've put a dent in them; and we believe we've played a role in sustaining the hope that things can get better.

And we've had two small, clear victories: we persuaded RoyalAuto magazine to take down a ridiculous photo of a car desecrating a 'pristine' beach; and we forced Suzuki to modify a scandalous advertising campaign based on the notion that driving dangerously is 'fun'.

And we've had a lot of good times together and with the bush; and learned a lot ourselves: about the small corner of the world we live in, damaged, but still beautiful.